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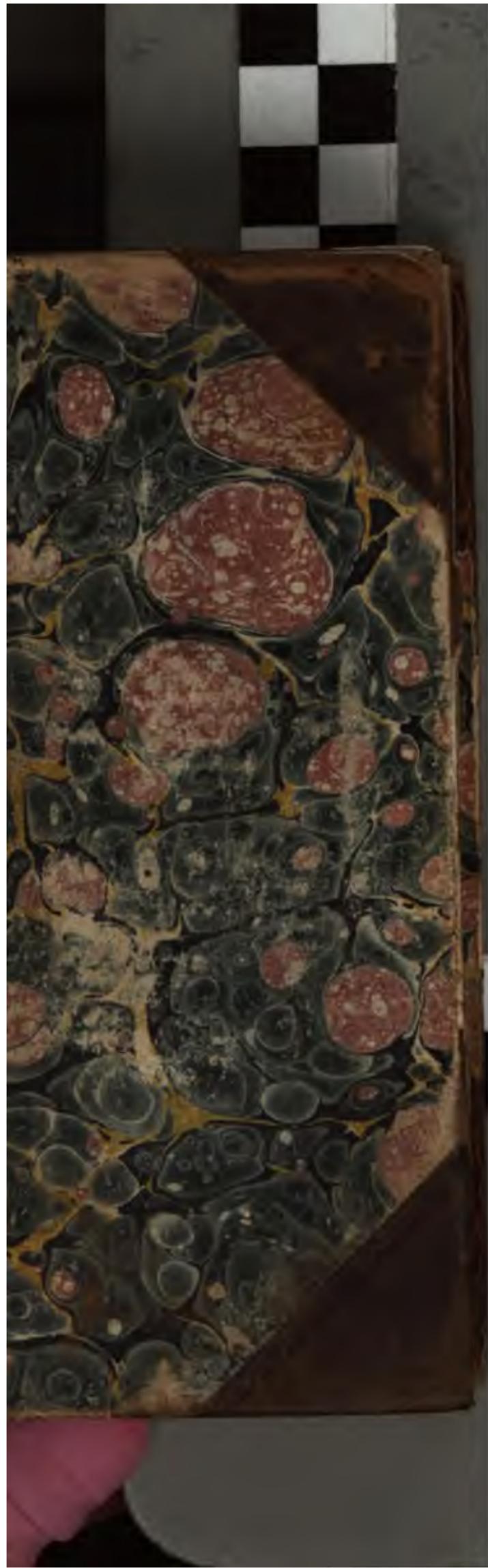
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ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
TAXATION.

No. IV.

THE
JERSEYMEN PARTING.

A Tale.

BY

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

LONDON:
CHARLES FOX, 67, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1834.

191.



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[REDACTED]

For some of the materials of this and the preceding No., I am indebted to Mr. Inglis's very interesting volumes on the Channel Islands.

The next No. will conclude my work.

H. M.



THE JERSEY MEN PARTING.

CHAPTER I.

A BUSY MAN AT LEISURE.

THERE are but too many people in London who look upon a prison very much as they look upon any other building : but of such people few are from Jersey, or from any place where, as in Jersey, the inhabitants are prosperous, and the temptations to crime are therefore few. The family of Le Brocq had not been accustomed to see a sentence of death lightly received as implying nothing worse than a gratuitous removal to a country where, whatever other hardships there may be, there is no difficulty in procuring food and spirits. They had not been accustomed to the language of penal justice in England, where " transportation " may mean nothing more than removal to Woolwich, to sleep in a stationary vessel at night, and rest upon a broom in the dock-yard during the day, in the intervals of being watched. They had not been accustomed to see convicts adjusting their leg chain in the presence of strangers, as if it had been a boot or a gaiter ; nor to hear the merriment of the disgraced ; nor to witness calculations as to the

economy of living in a prison for a while. To have seen an offender after conviction was to them a rare circumstance; and when such a chance had befallen, there had been a conflict of feeling between their extreme curiosity to see any one in circumstances so peculiar and interesting, and their fear of insulting the fallen.

Durell, though a Jerseyman, had lost some of this feeling through the familiarity with jails which was induced by his office. The idea of depriving a man of his natural liberty, of using force upon him in any way, was as repugnant to him as it will be to everybody a few ages hence; but, the outrage being an actual fact, the attendant circumstances had lost some of their power. If it had not been so, he would not have pronounced that Aaron might go home for the night of his arrest, as his peril was not such as could induce him to abscond. He was wrong. Aaron's peril for working on unentered premises was of being taken before two magistrates, and sentenced to three months' hard labour in prison. Whether three months, or three years, or three hours of hard labour, it would have been much the same to Aaron, if within the walls of a prison. Before daylight he was on the cold, foggy Thames, hastening he knew not well whither, and cared little, so long as he was out of reach of the arm of the law.

His father did not abscond, because he had a wife and daughter; but never was any man more perplexed how to choose between two dreadful evils than Le Brocq. Equal to a Jerseyman's

horror of a prison is his repugnance to pay money. Having at home but little money and an abundance of all that he really wants, he will make any shifts with his materials rather than buy. He will first impoverish his live stock rather than go to market to purchase proper food for them ; and then, his live stock failing, he will impoverish his land rather than pay for manure. Thus, Le Brocq's grand inducement to come to England having been the supposed exemption from paying taxes in money, he could not endure the idea of laying down a heavy sum as a fine, while any alternative remained. He persuaded himself, and declared to the court, that he could not raise the money ; and went to prison. This was against Durell's judgment, and in the firm persuasion that Aaron would appear in a day or two, to conduct the business and take care of the women. It seemed to him so utterly ridiculous to consider Aaron's accident of working on unentered premises as a punishable offence, that there could be no danger of the young man's being inquired after when he had been found "not at home" for twenty-four hours.

He also was wrong. Anna was alone when she drew near the prison to visit her father, after a few days' confinement. She had never been out on so painful an errand. She walked past, two or three times, in hopes that the disagreeable-looking people about the gate would have gone away and left a clear path for her : but they stood a long while, leaning against the wall with folded arms, some chatting and laughing, and others

abusing the powers within for keeping them waiting. Before they had disappeared, more came ; and Anna saw that the time during which she might obtain admittance would pass away if she waited to go in alone. Nobody seemed to mind her, after all, and the turnkey was civil enough ; so civil, that she found courage, after a moment's struggle, to do what she considered justice to her father, and assure the turnkey, as he showed her the way, that it was for no crime that her father was there, but only for a mistake about a tax. The man seemed to think this no business of his ; and indeed there was nothing in his manner to any of his charge to indicate that such a distinction signified at all.

It was a great disappointment to Anna to find that she could not see her father alone. Two persons were in the same apartment with him, —a dingy, close room, where it must be extremely irksome for three people to pass the day without employment. Anna saw at a glance how irksome it really was. Nothing but the extreme of ennui could have placed her father in the position in which she found him,—trying to play at cards with his companions. Such cards ! such companions ! and he, ignorant as he was known by Anna to be of modern card-playing ! He had borne his part in a single ancient game of cards (though he preferred dominoes) on the gay nights of Christmas or New Year in his Jersey home, when the punch-bowl was steaming and cakes were heaped on the hospitable board round which he had gathered

his family and neighbours ; but his game and his card-playing notions were little suited to his present place and companionship. It was a dismal amusement here, in this cheerless room, with sordid accompaniments of every kind, and two of the players impatient at the incompetency of the third. Their voices were none of the most harmonious when first heard on the opening of the door ; and when it appeared that Anna came to interrupt, Le Brocq's partner threw down his cards in a pet. Le Brocq cast away his, exclaiming—

“ My dear, what are you here for ? ”

“ Only to see you, father. But I am in the way, I'm afraid,”—looking at the peevish man opposite.

“ Never mind him,” replied her father. “ We have time enough and too much for that sort of thing. Why did not you send Aaron, instead of coming yourself into such a place ? You know I do not like—”

“ I knew you would be vexed with me for coming ; but my mother was so unhappy about nobody seeing you. When Aaron comes home ——But, father, we have not seen him yet.”

“ Not yet ! Do you mean that he has never come back at all ? ”

“ Never.”

“ Nor written ? What can the lad mean ? Whenever he does come back, he shall learn—I will teach him what he may expect by playing such pranks.”

He saw by Anna's downcast eyes that she

thought such threats, if they could be overheard, were not the most likely means of bringing her brother back again. They put her too much in mind of the scolding mother's address to her offending child, which she had overheard in the street,—“ Come here, you little wretch, and let me flay you alive.” Le Brocq added more gently,

“ You are not afraid of any harm having happened? Have you asked anybody?”

“ Mr. Durell says—”

“ Durell! That you should go and disgrace our family before that man, of all people! What has Durell to do with us, beyond getting us into mischief?”

“ My mother asked him, because we thought he knew most about what people do when they get into trouble with the Excise.”

“ Not he. He thought I should pay the fine rather than come here. That shows how much he knows. But what does he say?”

“ He does not think Aaron will come back,” said Anna, with a faltering voice.

“ He has enticed him away somewhere, then. What should make the lad stay away?”

“ When they run away, they get disgusted with the law, Mr. Durell says, and set themselves against it. Too many, he says, turn to secret distilling, or to braving the law in some other way. And that is what we fear for Aaron.”

“ Nonsense: he is safe enough with Malet by this time, I have no doubt. He has been rope-making there this fortnight, depend upon it.”

“ He was not there four days ago, as we learn

by a letter from Louise this morning. We were so glad to see the letter! But there is nothing about Aaron, except their supposing that he must be managing the business while——”

“ I don’t think I need read the letter,” observed Le Brocq, pushing it away from him. He was afraid of the pain of seeing what his daughter might say about his being in prison. “ Your mother is happy for to-day, I suppose, now she has heard from Louise?”

“ Not very,” answered Anna, with a tear or two. “ Father, she is always crying out for Louise to come. She seems as if she thought everything would be right if Louise was here. But I am sure I dare not think of it. It is something to think that one of us is safe; and why should Louise be more safe than anybody else, if she came? There are other snares yet, Mr. Durell says; and where no stranger can do anything hardly without falling into a snare, is not it much better that Louise should stay away? Is not it, father?”

“ To be sure. It was mistake enough for us to come.”

“ Then, you will let us go away again? May I tell Louise so?”

“ O, yes. Tell her that, as soon as you hear of my being buried, you shall see if you can raise money enough to get back to Jersey; and that I charge her——”

“ Buried! father.”

“ Yes. I am very ill, and it is my belief that

I shall die here. So your mother is very unhappy?"

"Yes: but you don't mean that you are really going to die? I am sure something might be done to persuade the king to take some of your stone-ware, if you have not the money. I am sure they would let you out in that way. And my mother is so miserable! Every footstep that I am apt to take for Aaron's, she thinks must somehow be Louise; and then she thinks of how proud it would make her to see Louise's husband setting all right, and—"

"Poor child! She taunts you with having no lover here! No wonder you look for Aaron back! She finds fault with you again for sending away poor François, who would indeed have been a great help to us now. But no wonder you look for Aaron back!"

"It was such a disappointment last night, father! There was a soft tap at the door, just before we went to bed; and we never doubted its being Aaron. I told him through the key-hole that I would open the door in a minute; and when I did, it was Mr. Studley. And now he will have it, from what I said, that Aaron is with us sometimes; and he would stay—"

"Your mother would not let him in, to be sure? She would not let the rascal in?"

"She could not lawfully prevent his coming in; but she would not allow him to stay there. I never saw such a spirit in her before. But we heard him outside for three hours after. If I

could have persuaded my mother to go into the back room, so that he could not have heard her cry, I should not have minded it so much."

"What! has the fellow overheard our lamentation? I thought your mother had—That should never have happened if I had been at home."

"Then I wish you would come home, father. Never mind the loss. Never mind the ruin, if it must be ruin."

Le Brocq answered doggedly, as he had always done before, that he had not the money. If any body had told him, when he took the business, that, independently of his scrape with the Excise Court, he should now be without money, he would not have believed it, after all that had been held out to him about the quantity of money he should make. It was not from spending. He had pinched and toiled more than he had ever done in Jersey; and all to plunge himself deeper. If he had been out of business, dressing his wife in velvet, and feasting on foreign fruits and claret, he would have paid less to the state than he had done as an employer of workmen, denying himself and his family, meantime, anything beyond the commonest comforts of life. It was the paying several times over that was enough to ruin any man. The workmen could not pay the taxes upon everything that they ate, and drank, and wore. Their wages were raised in proportion; so that their masters paid. No man should judge of his fortune by his returns till he knew what he had to pay in wages. O, yes; he charged these

wages in the price of his bottles, so that the bottle consumers paid in their turn: but he, as a consumer of other things, paid in his turn, in like manner; till, among so many outgoings, he had no money left. And all for what? To contribute his share towards the expenses of government, which he might have paid, if he had been properly asked, at half the cost, and a hundredth part of the pain and trouble!

"But you did not like that way of paying when you were in Jersey, father."

"Because I was told there was a better, and was fool enough to believe it. It is the most shameful hoax, the making me pay as I have paid since I came here! You need not look so frightened, as if I was talking treason," he continued, seeing that Anna was uneasy at his being overheard complaining of being hoaxed in state matters. "I am saying no harm of the king; for he loses more than I. If I am hoaxed, he is double-hoaxed, as I could easily prove."

"Could you? Then perhaps," said Anna, timidly, "perhaps, if you told him so—"

"Ay; I could set the case plainly enough before him, if I could see him; but there's the difficulty."

"I will ask Mr. Durell, and he will ask the Board, I dare say," exclaimed Anna. "We could say that you would not detain his majesty very long,—not more than half an hour, perhaps."

"Not so much; but I am afraid that would not do. If you consider how many hundreds of

people are in prison, or otherwise ruined by the Excise, it seems hardly likely that the king should give half-an-hour to each."

One of the inmates of the apartment, who was keeping himself awake with playing Patience with the dirty cards, while the other dozed, here put in his word.

"If his majesty gave his time to every body that is injured by the Excise, there would be no time left for any other business; and you are simple people if you do not know that."

"There is another thing," observed Le Brocq. "If the king was on our side, there are his ministers to convince. Now, it seems to me that his majesty might not exactly carry in his head all I might say, to repeat to them; and it would be as well that he should have it in black and white."

"O, a letter to him!" cried Anna, brightening. "Let me write down to your speaking, father; now, while I am here; and I can put it into the post-office as I go home. They say letters are most sure to reach people when they go through the post-office."

Anna laid aside her bonnet, put her hair back from her face, and looked round for something wherewith to dust the shabby, rickety table. The card-player picked the pocket of the sleeper of his handkerchief, and handed it to Anna, who used it without scruple, rather than that the king should have to open a dirty letter. But where was the paper? If she went out to buy a sheet, perhaps they would not let her come in again;

and her father had none. The card-player again offered to be their resource. He proposed to let them have a sheet of paper, and the use of his ink, pen, and penknife for a shilling.

"Money again!" exclaimed Le Brocq. "The English go on ruining one another, even in jail, with asking for money, money, for ever. I shall pay away no more money, I assure you, sir."

"Well, then, money's worth will do as well. That young lady has brought something for you in her basket, I believe?"

"I have, sir. I have brought something for my father, as you say; and for no one else. When we lived in Jersey, it was a pleasure to make and bake for those that wanted it, and to give it even before they asked for it. But what I have brought is for my father's eating, and not to pay away for a sheet of paper, when it happens to be his need to write a letter. Father, I like this place less and less for you. I did not think there had been a place, even a prison, where people who sit at the same table would so take advantage of one another's wants."

"Even a prison!" said the man, smiling; "why, ma'am, I hope you don't think the worst people are found in prisons? Let me tell you that those whom you would call the worst have the sense to keep out of prison. If you had lived in London as long as I have, you would see how a prison has lost its bad name; as it ought to do, if it is to be judged by the people it holds."

"I should be afraid it would give a bad name

to the people it holds, instead of getting a good one to itself," observed Anna, sighing.

"No, no. You Jersey people know nothing about our English prisons. In your island, a man must be a really bad man, or have done some one very bad deed, to get himself shut up. But here, what do you see? Almost all the prisoners are in for debt, or for crimes against property, or for revenue offences. The first and last are not reckoned crimes in a country where it is so difficult to a great number to keep clear of money entanglements and of tax-gatherers; and under the other head come those who would not have done worse than their neighbours, but for such want as you do not see in Jersey. In our prisons, you meet more of the poor and the ignorant than of the guilty; and, this being seen, prisons are losing their bad name, as I said, among the people. You will hardly speak ill of them, from this time forward, your father having been in one, and hundreds more as good as he."

Anna saw that there must be something very wrong about all this. It perplexed all her notions about guilt and punishment. She had till now looked upon her father as an injured man, and regarded him as an innocent person, detained by mistake in a horrible place, and among vile companions; and now to be told that the only mistake was in her notion of a prison, and that her father was no more than an ordinary inmate, dismayed her so that she desired to hear no more. She spread out Louise's letter, and proposed to

write on it in pencil what her father had to say to the king; and to copy it out fair at home. The card-player found it to no purpose to reduce his terms. His first overcharge had deprived him of a customer for his dingy paper and dusty ink. The letter was as follows:—

"I, John Le Brocq, have something to say to your majesty which may prove of equal consequence to us both, and to many more. I am sure your majesty cannot be aware how much harm is done by the way in which your majesty's taxes are collected. I really think that if any one had set himself to work to devise a way for taking as much as possible from us people, and giving as little as possible of it to you the king, and hindering manufactures and trade at the same time, he could not have hit upon a cleverer scheme than that of the excise system of taxation. As for myself, I have only to say, that I would rather have paid twice over as much as your majesty has received of my money, than have been deluded and cheated as I have been; of which, however, I beg to add, I believe your majesty entirely innocent. The fault is in the system, sir; and I believe you did not make it. But here I am in prison. My son is gone away, we do not know where; and my daughter is under prosecution, having (as I will say, though she holds the pen) never had an evil thought of your majesty in her life. All this is from our having fallen into mistakes about taxes which I am sure we never made any difficulty about paying. Not having been told what a large capital

I should require for advancing the tax on the stone-bottles I make, and for paying the high wages my men must have to buy taxed articles, I should have found it difficult to get on, even if I had not been fined for breaking laws which I defy any man to learn in a day; and which, I must say, do not tell much to the credit of those who made them. And how much of this goes into your majesty's pocket, after all? for that is the chief point. I, for one, know of a crowd of fellows that have to be paid out of the money in question for spying and meddling about our premises in a way that hinders our work terribly. One in ten or twenty,—ay, one in fifty of these men would be enough to collect what we should have to contribute, if we each knew our own share, and might pay and have done with it. And these men are not all that profit by the plan. It affords a good excuse for making people give higher prices than the tax of itself would oblige them to give. Your majesty may have heard what the tavern-keepers did when a tax equal to twopence a bottle was laid on port wine? They clapped on sixpence a bottle directly; something in the same way that we put a higher price on our stone pots, which are not taxed, to make them more nearly equal with the bottles which are taxed. This saves us in part from the spite of the glass-bottle makers, who, I fancy, were the parties that got our article taxed; but it has the effect of stinting the use of them. Your glass-bottle duty brings you in a very little more than 100,000*l.*, and that on stone-bottles

little more than 3000*l.* a-year ; while, if there were no such duties, there would be so much traffic in foreign mineral waters, and other liquids that people cannot get on account of the duty, as would much improve the affairs of the shipping, and the wealth of your majesty's subjects, who would then easily make you welcome to more than the sums named above, if you could not do without them. Then the army of excisemen (who can hardly be a sort of persons much to your majesty's taste) might be employed in helping instead of hindering others' business. Then again, please to think of the injury to thousands of men from trade being cramped and put out of its natural order. To make soap and glass and my particular article, there is much coal wanted ; and for paper-making, iron machinery ; and for all, houses, and furnaces or coppers. Now, if the trade in each were not cramped by the dearness of the article, there would be more work for the woodcutter and the carpenter, for the miner and coal hewer, for the brickmaker and the shipmaster, and a great number more. O, your majesty may depend upon it, however much may be said about the riches and glory of this kingdom, it might be richer and more glorious, and far happier, if your people were allowed to pay to the state in a less wasteful and pernicious way ; while you would find your advantage in it before the year was over. If you should please to consult your ministers about this, and to order them to let me out, I think I could engage to show them the difference, as far as my own share

is concerned : though the experiment is by no means a fair one when tried on only one article. If your majesty thinks of travelling, perhaps you may manage to take Jersey in your way ; and there I think you will own that the advantage of steady natural prices and a free trade are very evident in the comfortable condition of the people."

" Had not we better stop here ?" asked Anna. " I am afraid if we make it longer he will not read it."

Le Brocq was sorry to leave off just when he was about to describe his own country ; but he acknowledged the propriety of doing so. Anna just slipped in a postscript of her own.

" Perhaps your majesty will consider the mischief of a man like my father being shut up and treated like a criminal, in such a place as a prison, where he can only play cards to pass the day, (and that with disagreeable people,) instead of being industrious in his family, as he would wish. Perhaps this may lead you to take pity on my mother, who, for all her Bible can say, is worn down with grief ; and on my brother, who is a wanderer from fear of a prison ; and on me, who am in the like danger. Next to Him who bindeth and looseth, your majesty is our only hope,—not only for present pardon, but for altering the laws, that we may not fall into the like trouble again.—Your obedient servant,

" ANNA LE BROCQ."

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"How much of that letter do you fancy the king will ever read, if he gets it?" asked the card-player, smiling.

"It is hardly long enough to tire him much, if it is nicely copied; and ours is very good ink," replied Anna.

"But I mean, do you think he will find it worth attending to?"

"They say he used to write frequent letters to his father and mother when he was young; and so he must know that when people write a letter, they like to have it attended to."

"Then, if I write to you, ma'am, I shall expect an answer."

"You can have nothing to say to me which you cannot say now to my face—an opportunity which we have not with the king," replied Anna, quietly. She then turned to her father, and offered to bring him dominoes, which she thought he would like better than those cards. She also hoped she could borrow a book or two from the Durells. Permission was given to try; but she was warned that her request might be refused if it was really Durell's doing that the family were persecuted and distressed. She knew that this was so far from being the case, that Durell himself was under extreme vexation from an imputation of Studley's, that he had allowed himself to be bribed in his office by the Le Brocqs; but there was no hope of persuading her father yet that Durell was not an enemy. She succeeded better in another direction. She got leave to consult with her mother, and see whether the

fine could not be raised. Le Brocq really looked and felt very unwell ; and the unlimited prospect of confinement, dust, disagreeable companionship and dominoes, was far from cheering.

The sun now shot its level rays upon an opposite roof which glittered back into the apartment.

"This is just the weather and the time for seeing Coutances Cathedral," observed the prisoner, as Anna was about to leave the room. She also was just thinking of Jersey, its wide views and pure atmosphere ; but she had said nothing to tantalize him who was confined in a space of twenty square feet.

"You may leave me Louise's letter, after all," said he, forgetting what was written on the back. He was chafed at the circumstance, but would not read the epistle before witnesses. He would wait till Anna's next visit ; but, as soon as she was gone, he gave away the supper she had brought him, and rejected all amusement in his pining for news of his blossoming orchard, and of the fruitful pastures of his native island. While he settled within himself that Anna was an unexceptionable daughter, his mind's eye was occupied with Louise, hailing her graceful kine, or pacing on her pack-horse through the deepest of the lanes. When he looked round him, he wished that it was dark, that he might fancy himself there.

CHAPTER II.

KNITTING AND UNRAVELLING.

THE pottery business was not brought quite to a stand in consequence of the master's absence. The women could not undertake to carry it on as usual ; and there was not money enough coming in to pay the people's wages : but Anna was on the spot to read the letters that came ; it was thought a pity that the horse should either be sold or stand idle ; and, what was more, the boy Brennan seemed to have gained ten years in spirit and wisdom since he had been taken notice of by Durell. One of the workmen, who had been on the premises a good many years, and who cordially disliked Studley, was willing to do his best to keep the concern going, either till Aaron should appear or Le Brocq be released. The little fellow at the lathe remained, and one furnace was employed, just to execute the most pressing orders, and preserve something of the credit and custom of the establishment. Nothing more than executing orders was attempted ; for it was very undesirable to add to the stock. Anna's wish was to dispose of enough of this stock to pay her father's fine and the law expenses, which together made no small sum : but, whether from a suspicion respecting the fair dealing of the family, arising from Le Brocq's imprisonment, or from the absence of all the parties who could push the business, no sales

could be effected. Durell put her in the way of advertising in the newspapers; from which nothing accrued but the expense of the advertisements. Brennan exerted all his ingenuity to embellish his handywork; but his endeavours brought no new customers. He was chidden by the man under whom he worked for his fancies about new patterns. He was grumbled at by his comrade at the lathe for keeping him after working hours, to finish some fresh device. He was gravely questioned by his mother about spending a portion of his hard earnings in buying some new runners which formed a remarkably pretty ring-pattern for his jars; and, after all, nobody bought a jar or a flask the more. Hour after hour, Anna sat amidst her stock, growing nervous over her work in listening for footsteps. Day after day, she came in to dinner, without any news for her mother, and almost afraid to meet her inquiring eye. The stock was offered at a low price. If she could have sold the duty-paid part of it, her father would have been injured by being compelled to sacrifice his interest upon the advance of duty he had made for his customers. As it would not sell, he was more injured still. He could not get back the principal of this advance. It seemed as if Le Brocq could not escape in any way from being injured by this excise system. So it was; and so it is with all who in this country buy any thing, or make any thing, or live in any less primitive manner than Robinson Crusoe or Little Jack,

There was another reason for Anna being nervous over her work, besides listening in vain for customers. The affair of the tea had never come to an end. From the quantity of business before the court, and from other circumstances, it had been postponed; and one or two of Anna's friends had tried to persuade her that she would hear no more of it. But she was too anxious to be easily comforted. She knew Studley too well to believe that he would stop short of injuring the family to the utmost. She found that she was legally guilty; and she suffered little less than if she had been morally guilty. Day and night was the idea of approaching exposure and punishment before her. There were but few people,—not half-a-dozen of her nearest neighbours,—who would believe in her utter ignorance of the excise laws; and her character for fair dealing would be gone. If Aaron had not run away, she almost thought she should. She could now fancy how people might be driven to destroy themselves. The old feeling which had embittered her childish disgraces now came back upon her,—that if she could but get out of this one scrape, she would go somewhere where she could never get into another. If she forgot her apprehensions for an hour in her concern for her parents' troubles, they came back to plunge her into redoubled misery. It may be doubted whether many criminals suffer so much in the prospect of their trial and punishment as did this innocent girl from the consequences of a factitious transgression. They who prepare the ap-

paratus for such transgression can little know what demoralization and misery they are causing, or they would throw up their task.

She knew Studley best. She was the least surprised, though infinitely the most dismayed, when the crisis came at last. She heard her mother's heavy tread in the shed below, and could trace her progress to the foot of the stairs by the jingling among the wares.

"Anna! Anna, child!" exclaimed the old lady, out of breath with her exertions. "Here is Mr. Studley! you must come down; he won't leave his business with me." After an interval, "Anna, child, do you hear?"

"Yes, mother."

"Then, are you coming?"

"Yes, mother."

"Well, make haste."

Studley was there in his capacity of messenger. His errand was not, to his taste, so good as if he had come with a levy warrant, or a body warrant;—a summons was but a poor infliction; but, such as it was, he enjoyed it.

"When must I go, sir?"

"To-morrow, at eleven. You must be at the court by eleven precisely, remember."

"And may I take any body with me, sir?"

"Do you mean as counsel, or merely as a support to your spirits?"

"I have nothing to defend, sir. I have no other excuse than my not knowing the law; and I can as well say that myself as get anybody to say it for me. I only mean that I should not

like to be quite alone, if the law allows me to take any friend with me."

"O, if you can persuade any body to appear with you, I have no idea that the court will make any objection."

"Will you please to stop a moment, sir? Is it the same court that my brother was to have appeared in, or some other?"

"Bless me, what an idea! You do not take me for a servant of the police magistrates, I suppose? It was before two police magistrates that your brother was to have gone; and I summon you before the Excise Court of Summary Jurisdiction. There is all the difference in the world."

It might be so; but to Anna's ringing ears and bewildered comprehension they were much alike. Studley applied himself to explain. The police magistrates were, according to him, far less awful personages, inasmuch as they tried all sorts of people for all sorts of offences; while the Commissioners deputed from the Excise Board to sit as judges in the Court of Summary Jurisdiction concerned themselves in nothing but excise offences or complaints. They had a vast deal of business to do, and sat twice a week for nine months in the year.

"Then I think," observed Mrs. Le Brocq, "there must be more breaking of the excise laws than of any other kind of law."

"There is a great deal of that sort of thing. Miss Le Brocq will find herself by no means solitary. The court settled eleven hundred cases last year, do you know?"

" Well, if I were the king," said the mother, " I had rather go without some of my money than have eleven hundred of my subjects brought into one court in one year, for not paying me properly, through mistake or otherwise."

When Anna could think, she remembered her former determination to ask Mrs. Durell to go with her before the court. She lost no time in proceeding to her house to make the request.

" Sit still, Stephen," said she mournfully, when she saw that Stephen was trying to shift out of sight, as was his wont when any of her family were known to be near. " Sit still, and put away your meek look before me. You have nothing to fear from any of us, even if I held proof in this right hand that you had done what we thought you did. We are ruined now. We have no heart to defend ourselves, or to try to punish our enemies."

" Pooh, pooh! this is all about the tea. They have been troubling you about the tea," said good Mrs. Durell; " and so you can see nothing but what is dismal this afternoon."

" Indeed, Mrs. Durell, it is too true," replied Anna, struggling with her tears. " I just came to ask you to go with me to-morrow morning—to be at the court by eleven o'clock."

" I have no objection in the world, my dear, but this. It might not be thought well for the surveyor's wife to be with you, perhaps. It might give occasion for something being said. Is there no other friend who might do you more service?"

Anna had no other friend. She could not think of taking her mother into a place so strange to her, and to see such a sight.

"Such a sight! Why, what sort of sight? How my husband would laugh at you, if he were here! One would think you were going to be tried for some foul crime. You will be surprised to find what a simple, easy thing it is, after all you have been fancying. O, I will go with you, my dear, if you can't find a better person."

"I do not think we need mind your being a surveyor's wife," said Anna, "when we consider how the court is made up of people that are connected together. The people of this court accuse me; and the people of this court summon me, and bear witness against me; and the people of this court judge and punish me. I never heard of such a court before; and I cannot say I think it a just one."

"There you are only of the same mind with everybody else, Anna. It is a kind of court which might better suit some slavish country than Great Britain. Without finding any fault with the gentlemen who sit in it, one may venture that much. The gentlemen understand their business very well, people say; and there is great convenience, in so complicated a system, in our having a place where excise matters may be settled speedily and cheaply, in comparison with what they might be under some other plan: but all this does not mend the principle of the court; through which the court might, if it chose, ruin

half the traders in London. It is too great a privilege for any set of men to have,—that of meddling with thousands of traders in the heart of the empire, and taking the accusing and judging and punishing all into their own hands. There now ! there's a sigh ! as if they were conspiring against you. If you will believe me, it will be over in a few minutes ; and everybody will forget all about you the moment you have turned your back, and a new case is called on."

" No ; not Mr. Studley."

" O, yes ; Mr. Studley too ; and, what is more, you yourself. You will have forgotten what took you there by the time you come away again. At least, I never went there without seeing or hearing something that took me out of myself for the whole day after."

There was not much comfort in this ; and Anna found she must wait till the next day to know fully what it meant. Mrs. Durell's next piece of advice undid all the little good she had done by making light of the occasion. She thought the intended visit to the prison had better be deferred till to-morrow afternoon, or the day after ; as Le Brocq would perhaps lose his night's rest in thinking about what was to happen in the court. This proved to Anna that she was not the only one who saw something serious in the affair.

How should she dress ? If she wore her best, it might be taken for defiance. If her everyday dress, (now shabby,) it might look like

wishing to attract compassion. Mrs. Durell assured her that there would scarcely be time for any one to note her dress ; but she did the kindest thing in inducing Anna to look altogether Jersey-like, so that her true account of herself and her error might be corroborated by her costume.

" Did not your mother say kindly that she would teach Stephen to knit ? " said Mrs. Durell. " Ay, who should forget old quarrels, if not such good people as you ? And think of the benefit to Stephen to have such a resource ! to have something to employ his hands upon in rainy weather, when my Jack is gone to school ! It would be a good time to begin this evening, I think, if you like to take him home with you. Stephen will be glad to do his part towards the forgiving and forgetting, I have no doubt."

Anna saw at once what a happy thought this was. Her mother liked nothing so well as teaching people to knit ; and if a blind person, so much the better ;—it took twice as long. It would help off this heavy evening, and save Anna from the *tête-à-tête* with her mother which she dreaded nearly as much as what was to follow. Stephen seemed on the eve of a yawn at the proposal ; but he knew his own interest too well not to seize this opportunity of placing himself on good terms with the Le Brocq family ; and he consented to accompany Anna home.

He made himself particularly agreeable, and fancied that he might have been more so if they would but have invited him to sing : but he did

not choose to offer it, remembering where he had once volunteered a similar service before. As he could not sing, he told some of his adventures, by bits and snatches, in the intervals of letting down stitches and waiting to have them taken up again. The reserve of the old lady melted away under the glow of conscious benevolence, while imparting her own favourite accomplishment to another; and Anna relented as she saw her mother cheered; and the faster in proportion as she became so herself.

"Nothing is so strange to me," she said, after a pause, when the evening was far advanced, " (and I cannot help thinking that it is a thing too strange to last,) how people shut their minds up,—how much they hide from one another, when they are brought as close together as face to face in water."

"Ay, mistress, there you have Scripture for its not being so for ever."

"And other signs, too, besides that Scripture saying. But, for an instance of what I mean, Mr. Stephen, here are you sitting between my mother and me; and for want of a window in your breast, we know no more of what we want to know, and of what you could tell us in two minutes, than if you were at one end of the world and we at the other."

"I thought of that," replied Stephen, "when I saw John Baker standing to take his trial for murder, when he had been beside me, and both of us like brothers, for a month. There, thought I, stands the man, with the secret in him: and

when he was questioning and cross-questioning one and another, it seemed a ridiculous beating about the bush, just for want of a window in his own breast, as you say. But I wonder what makes you think it will ever be otherwise. If men were all made alike, I grant you there would be a chance of all being known ; for they are the fewest, I fancy, who can never be melted into telling everything. I am sure when an old comrade gets me beside him under a sunny hedge, or when Mr. Durell and I are over our spirit and water, there is nothing that in some moods I can keep to myself."

Anna inwardly wished that it might be so when he was sitting between two knitters, sociably learning their art.

"But," continued Stephen, "there are, and always will be, men whose taste is for secrecy. There will always be men who will no more make a clean or an open breast than they would pull their hearts out."

"They will be read, like others, for all that," Anna said. "The longer men live together, and the more their eyes are turned upon each other, the more they learn to gather from signs. See how much doctors learn from marks which signify nothing to us, and the deaf from countenances, and the blind from tones of voice, and then tell me whether, if we were as observant as all these together, we might not read more of a man's mind than we now think of. And if we also study the make of the mind as some have learned to do, we may get to know of things unseen,

something in the way of the wise men who can tell us, years before, when a comet is coming,

"Or of the common man who knew the exact spot where a lion was, miles off, before it could be either seen or heard."

"How was that?" asked Mrs. Le Brocq, with some scepticism in her tone.

"He saw a large bird of prey in the air, so far off that it seemed but a speck. It hovered, which showed that there was a prey beneath; and it did not drop, which showed that something was beside the prey which prevented the bird from seizing it; and, from the nature of the country and of the bird, that something could be nothing but a lion; and a lion it was. It was by putting things together that the man knew this; and it is by putting things together that men will be known, if ever they are known."

"I am sure it is much to be wished that they should be," sighed Anna.

"Well, now, I don't agree with you there. I think half the fun in life lies in men puzzling one another, and watching one another in their puzzle."

"It has been the amusement of your life, we have some reason to think: but we have only too much cause to wish that hearts could be laid open to man as they are to God. The greatest support that we have in God is in being sure that he knows all; and if men could read us as thoroughly, and be sure that they read aright, there would be an end of our troubles. My father would be

seen to have meant no mistake, and I to have never had such a thought as cheating the king ; and we should know where Aaron is, and exactly why he went away. It seems to me that men make almost every sin and trouble they suffer under ; and that it is done by making mysteries and laying snares for one another."

Mrs. Le Brocq had hitherto looked rather less solemn than had been her wont since the afflictions of the family began : but now her tears were falling on her knitting needles, and Stephen overheard a little sob. He entreated her not to vex herself, and to hope that all was well with Aaron, and so forth. But this is not the kind of consolation which will satisfy any mother's heart ; and Mrs. Le Brocq said so.

" If you would comfort me," said she, " you must tell me where he is. How should I believe that all is well with him when there is the sea where he may be drowned, and the workhouse where he may find his way as a beggar, and plenty of prisons where he may be shut up, and snares spread every where for him to fall into ? I never hear of any evil happening but I think that he may be in it ; and when I pray——"

" O, mother, hush ! Don't speak so, mother."

" I say, child,—it may be a sin, but I can't help it,—I have often lately in my prayers fixed a time when I will despair of God's mercy if my boy does not come or send : and always as the time passes away, I do the same thing again ; and cannot set my mind either to give him up, or to hope with any certainty to see him more. You

are a good child to me, Anna ; and all that you say about trusting is very right ; and I dare say it comforts you, though I have overheard you crying in the night oftener than you know of. But for myself I say, if you wish to comfort me, tell me where Aaron is."

" Well, then, I will tell you where he is," cried Stephen, throwing away his handywork. " I don't know what I may get for it ; but I can no more help it than I could help telling anything to poor John Baker, when we sat under a hedge, as I said, and he kept all his own secrets while I was telling him all mine."

Neither Anna nor her mother spoke a word. It had never occurred to them that Stephen could know more of their nearest concerns than they did themselves.

" I will tell you where he is," continued Stephen, " and you may trust me for knowing ; for it was I that helped him off, and put him in the way of a flourishing business. But you must promise me to tell nobody what I say. That is, I suppose you must tell Le Brocq, but not till he has engaged to let it go no farther."

The promise was readily made, and then Stephen told that, so far from its being reasonable to expect Aaron when any one approached the house, Aaron was far off on the sea. He was plying in a smuggling vessel between one of the Channel islets and the south coast of England.

" Aaron a smuggler !"

" Yes ; and with all his heart. He had very little reason to like the law, while he was within

its bound ; and was not at all sorry to get out of its bound. Would it not be just the same with your father, now, if he could get away ? Has he any reason to like the law ? and do you think even he, though he is an orderly man enough, would hold it any great crime for a persecuted man to go beyond its reach ? ”

“ I call it coming within the reach of the law, not going beyond it,” said Anna, mournfully. “ The way to get out of reach of its oppression is to go back to Jersey ; and that is what I trust my father will do. O, why did not Aaron do that ? ”

“ He was afraid of being laid hold of either by the law or by your father,—and Aaron has no taste for tyranny, either way. The open sea, with a lawless calling, is much more to his mind. While he was here, he had no more chance for freedom than a midge in a field of gossamer ; and now, he is like a roving sea-bird, lighting on a rock to rest when he likes, and then away again over the waters.”

“ You will not deceive us any more, Stephen, by your way of hiding ugly things with fine words. The plain truth, dress it up as you will, is, that Aaron is living by braving the law. You know that he cannot show himself fearlessly among men : you know that he comes abroad at night because his works will not bear the daylight. You must have taken advantage of him in his distress, or he could never have thought of such a step. But I think no distress that I could ever fall into would make me follow your bidding,

seeing how you have already deceived us to our ruin. O, why did not Aaron go back to Jersey?"

"I wish, mistress, you would be a little less hard upon me. I did the best I could think of for your brother. When he came to Mr. Durell's to learn what was likely to befall him, I thought it only kind to tell him, as soon as Durell had turned his back, that there were means at hand for getting away, and leaving the tread-mill far behind him."

"So far we are obliged to you, I am sure," observed Mrs. Le Brocq. "I should not have liked to see my boy on the tread-wheel."

"So I knew, and I asked no reward beyond what it cost him nothing to give. I went with him myself, and introduced him on board a boat that you may have chanced to see off Gorey in the season. It is all very well to go and get oysters; but there is another more profitable sort of business to be done in those seas,—and will be, as long as the Customs duties of this country remain as they are. So, Aaron was off with a fair wind and tide; and I suppose he may now be cooling himself in a sea-cave, without leave of the law, since the law took him off from broiling himself beside a glass furnace."

"Does Mr. Durell know where he is?"

"He never asked me; and, depend upon it, he will never ask you."

"And what was the reward you desired of Aaron that it cost him nothing to give?"

"Only just a promise that I should hear nothing more of certain caps and handkerchiefs that

you lost, once upon a time. You will have a letter from Aaron, (when he can send it so that you shall not know whether it comes from east or west,) to ask you, for his sake, never to mention that matter more."

"So you did take them! I do believe you are a smuggler yourself," declared Anna. There was a tremor in her voice which showed Stephen that she was more or less alarmed at sitting next a smuggler and a thief.

"Don't be thinking of shifting your chair, Miss Anna. My pranking days are past. A cursed bitter wind, one cold night, inflamed my eyes, and brought me to the pass of being scarcely able to tell bright moonlight from pitch darkness; and then I could be of little use on the sea. I tried what I could do for our company on land, by discharging an errand or two for them, one of which was at your farm. But the hue and cry you made after me through all the island spoiled my game; and there was nothing for it but giving up and coming here, that I might not hurt those I could not help. So my pranking days are over."

"Then you are only half blind? Where is our linen? How did you get away?"

"I shall tell you, because you cannot recover the goods, in the first place: in the next, your credit is none of the best, just now, and would not overbalance my denial in any court; and lastly, I consider that I have paid off my debt in saving your brother. Come, come: no sighing over my plain-speaking, or I shall leave off

speaking plain. I am full three quarters blind, and so only one quarter a knave. I can see the candle on the table; but I should not know you from your mother, except by the walk and the voice. I can see a field from an orchard, but I could not have found my way if your brother had not first guided me. As for your linen, I did not steal it to make money by. It is bleaching on certain rocks beside the sea, or worn by some of the sun-burnt damsels that Aaron knows by this time,—who can keep watch as well as any coast-guard, or broil a fish handily when there is notice that the boat is creeping home through the land-shadow. They wanted a supply of such things; and I promised to bring some ready-made: but I went to the wrong place. In England, one may carry off a crammed washing basket, and nobody thinks it much of a wonder; but in Jersey, one might almost as well steal the island charter, to judge by the hue and cry that was made after me. I never saw such simple people."

"That comes of not making crimes of things that are innocent in themselves," said Anna, proud of her native island. "If it was treated as a crime to make soap or burn glass in one way rather than another, people would soon grow careless of so common a thing as crime, and make much less difficulty about breaking the law whenever it suited them. They are the most moral people who know of no crimes but those which God has called such, and who, while they pray 'lead us not into temptation,' take care to add

none to the temptations that God thinks enough for their strength."

"But how did you get away?" asked Mrs. Le Brocq. "I was awake a long while that morning, and I never heard you stir."

"That was because I was gone, I suppose. Knowing that it would take me some time to get down to the shore, I only waited till you all seemed sound asleep. The finding the latch of the door was a long job, wishing as I did to make no noise. When it was done, I expected to have come back again, for I made a great stumble on the threshold."

"I wish you had done it as you came in," observed Mrs. Le Brocq. "It would have been a token to us to look more closely after you."

"If you had dogs," continued Stephen, "they were so obliging as to be very quiet. There was only one creature that made a great noise,—and that I had no objection to,—an owl in the ivy about your chimney. I could not for the life of me help standing to shriek like an owl, to keep it up. I have often thought since how I stayed leaning over the palings, hooting, when my proper business was to slink away. Well, when I had got down to the brook-side, it took me some time to gather the linen together."

"We have often wondered how you managed to carry it all away."

"It was a heavy load for some way; but I left the half of it on the ridge, when I was once clear of your place,—left it for my comrades to fetch when I had got down to the boat, and told

them where to go for it. Luckily for me, you had been washing a large bag——”

“ My wool-bag ! ” exclaimed the old lady, piteously.

“ Your wool-bag, was it ? I am glad it had wanted washing that time. I crammed it full of the smaller things, and the rest made a great bundle tied with a coil of Aaron’s cord which I found in his coat-pocket. You remember I had his clothes on ? ”

This was a fact not likely to be forgotten.

“ I went down with the bag, and left the bundle just on the off-side of the ridge. The boat was dawdling within hail, all as it should be, though they had nearly given me up ; for I had been so long groping about that it was nearly time for you early Jersey people to be up and out of doors. Two of our comrades went up for the bundle, and carried——I dare say you will not believe what I am going to say now ? ”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Because in Jersey you are not up to the smuggling ways which are well enough understood everywhere on the south coast of England. We expected that you would do as the people do there ;—if your horses were found tired in the morning, or any convenient thing taken away, look round to see what was left in exchange, or trust that something would come, and hold your tongues about the trespass. Supposing you understood all this, we sent up a choice cask of spirits and a package of tobacco, and some prettier things for you ladies than any we took away.

These were to have been left for you on the ridge ; but we soon saw it would not do."

" We should never have guessed," said Mrs. Le Brocq ; " and indeed I do not well understand it now. But how do you mean that it would not do ?"

" By the fluster you made, our people saw that it would not do,—that you would have us followed, if we left any sign of who we were, and what part of the coast we had been upon. It was easy to see that you were not the folks who could take a hint. There were your fowls fluttering, and men's and women's voices shouting, and Le Brocq thumping with his great stick, and one of the poor young ladies leaning her head against her cow to cry."

" Did they see Louise do that ?"

" Miss Louise, was it ? Yes, they saw it; and very sorry they were when they found how the thing was taken ; but it showed them that it was time to be off. So they crept round under the rocks till they could stand out among the boats from Gorey, being pretty sure that they would pass unquestioned through the Thames and Medway men, who know something of what must happen on the Channel waters while the Custom-house interferes between the French and English as it does. Now, Miss Anna, let me have the pleasure of hearing that you believe my story,—that you perceive that I am not a common thief, and that you will fulfil your brother's wishes in sparing me all future allusion to my Jersey adventure."

"I cannot help believing your story, Stephen ; and I only wish the King and his Ministers could hear and believe it ; and see how, through their way of taxing, a man that scorns being a common thief is proud of being an uncommon one. Yes, Stephen, you are a thief, and you have helped to make Aaron one. You were a thief towards us, and Aaron is one towards the Government, getting his living as he does by robbing the State of some of its dues. God pardon those that made dishonest men of you both ! I had rather see Aaron on the tread-wheel for an offence of mere heedlessness than out on the free waters on a guilty errand. You have done him no real good, Stephen. Boast no more of it."

"I swear that I have," said Stephen, with his usual good humour ; "and I can do more : I can make the good extend to you. I know you want to get rid of some of your stock ; Durell told me so. I can put you in the way ; but Durell need not know that. It is a pity that your bottles, and your pretty stone spirit-casks should stand piled upon one another here, of no use to anybody, while Aaron and his party are bringing over liquors——"

"Now have done, Mr. Stephen. One might think you were a tempting spirit, sent to try us. You would sink my mother and me next, I suppose ?"

"Not sink, but raise you, my dear ;—get your father out of gaol, your fine paid (for I suppose it will end in your being fined to-morrow)——

Plague on it ! here is Durell,—come for me, I suppose. Very kind of him to come himself ! Always kind, I am sure : but if he had left me another half hour—Not a word before him, remember."

" I was afraid you would find Stephen a bad scholar, Mrs. Le Brocq," said Durell, taking up the knitting from its dangling position over the side of the table. " Offer to give Stephen a lesson in anything, and it always ends in his giving you a story instead."

" That is what I have been doing to-night, indeed," replied Stephen. " But you never saw two people more in need of a story than these ladies. They are as frightened about this little matter of to-morrow—"

" My wife sends her love to you, Miss Anna," said Le Brocq, " and she has been thinking, ever since you saw her, about going with you to-morrow ; and she has made up her mind that it will be against your interest, that she, a surveyor's wife, should appear with you. She adds that if you still urge it—"

" By no means," said Anna, quickly. " I can go alone. If it is God's will that I should have no friends, I trust it is His will that I can do without them."

" You will never be without friends while my wife and I live," replied Durell, calmly ; " but I was going to add, for my own share, that I could not think of any member of my family appearing in that court as the friend of any offender. We know perfectly well that you are as innocent

of any intended offence against the Government as my boy Jack ; but the offence is real in law. I owe duty to the Government, and it would disgrace me in my office, it would be a failure of duty to appear to countenance any transgression of the law which it is my business to enforce. One of the penalties of such an office as mine is to have to speak and act in this way to a friend, —to one whose offence is merely legal, not moral—but you see——”

“ I see.”

“ Well : you shall not go alone. Brennan’s mother is a very decent good woman ; and she is so obliged to your family for your kindness to her boy, that she will go with you with all her heart.”

“ Do not say ‘with all her heart.’ Say rather because you asked her,” said Anna, feeling the humiliation of owing this kind of obligation to a stranger.

“ Nay. Hear from the boy himself, if you will, whether his mother is not pleased to be of use to you ; and if there is anything, my dear, that we can do for you without compromising my duty, only send for me. If you want any more law knowledge, I may be able to help you, knowing how little is learned and wanted in Jersey ; and if you should happen to fall into further trouble, you may look far and wide for a better comforter than my wife. Come, Stephen, are you ready ?”

Anna’s heart sank as they closed the door behind them. She and her mother looked at one

another without speaking. They had been beguiled for a time by Stephen's strange stiffness; but, this being over, they now found this the best thing they could do was to go to bed.

CHAPTER III.

A MATE FOR MOTHER HUBBARD.

Do criminals feel glad or sorry when they wake and find it broad morning, two hours before their execution? Are they thankful to have been beguiled with sound sleep, or had they rather have had broken slumbers, finding again and again that it is still dark, or only just dawning yet? To those who love their beds, and dread the coming of the hour of rising, and nothing worse, there is something pleasant in being thus repeatedly reminded that it is not time to get up; but how it may be when a worse evil impends has perhaps never been told. Anna's experience (and she felt that her case was very like a going to execution) could not throw any light upon the matter; for she did not sleep at all.

Breakfast was as much out of the question as sleep. She did not pretend to take any, even to please her mother, for she had something to do which would occupy her whole time till Mrs. Brennan came for her. During the night it had occurred to her that there could be no harm in

carrying with her a copy of her father's letter to the King, lest that which she had put into the post-office should not have reached its destination. The employment was good for her. It prevented her being in quite so disagreeable a state of palpitation and thirst as she might have suffered if she had been quite at liberty for watching the clock. The Brennans came at last before they were expected.

"Your boy with you, Mrs. Brennan! Do you mean him to go too?"

"He is so very anxious, ma'am, to be of use to you; and it struck him that you might wish, in the middle of the business, to send for somebody, or to have some kind of messenger at hand."

Anna shook her head. Whom could she send for at her utmost need?

"I wonder," said Anna, when she had put on her shawl, and was casting her last fluttered look around her,—"I wonder whether I should take a pound or two of that tea with me. The gentlemen may require to see it."

"I should be disposed, ma'am," said Mrs. Brennan, "to leave it to the informers to show the article that they complain of. It is not your part, I should think, to be aiding their cause."

Anna had opened the door of the cupboard where her packages of adulterated tea were ranged as neatly as every other article which the house contained. She now quickly closed it, and seeing that there was no further pretence for lingering, solemnly kissed her mother and departed.

As they walked, Mrs. Brennan showed herself to be a partisan of Anna's. In this leaning towards the defendant she was only like other people. Where the King is prosecutor, not paying for his law, the popular inclination is usually against him; and especially when he sues for his moneyed rights. This indicates the policy of contracting instead of multiplying such proceedings to the utmost.

"I am afraid the judgment will go against you, ma'am," said the good woman, "and it is the best kindness to tell you so beforehand. There is little hope for you against the King, especially when he makes other people pay his lawyers. A gentleman that I knew was fined 50*l.* and the costs came to 500*l.* In this court, however, there are often no costs, and the business is done pretty quickly and cheaply,—which does not, as I say, make it the less a pity that it should have to be done at all. You are lucky, too, ma'am, in not having to do with a jury, as juries were, on excise cases, some time ago. Ma'am, the jury used to have two guineas and a dinner when they found a verdict for the Crown, and only one guinea, and no dinner, when they found for the defendant. You may suppose the accused seldom got his cause."

"And yet juries seem generally to be thought good things for the accused," observed Anna.

"Some people consider it a great stretch of power to do without them in excise cases, ma'am; but, dear me, there would be no end of trials by jury, if all that are informed against

were so tried. The court would have to be open all day from the first of January to the last of December, and a thousand people a year would be ruined for law expenses. Besides, they say that the quick judgments given by these gentlemen, on the information of their own servants, strike a wholesome terror into folks, without which the laws would not be observed."

Anna could answer for the terror. Whether it was wholesome was another question.

How she reproached herself for her terrors about her own fate when she witnessed some of the cases presented this day in court! She could have been amused at some, from the apparent frivolity of the charges, if the consequences had not appeared more grave than the accusations: but there were others which could be viewed only with intense commiseration.

What had Dennis Crook done that he was called upon to pay 4*l.* 15*s.* 4*d.*? Dennis Crook was a paper-stainer, and had neglected to pay the duty of 2*l.* 7*s.* 8*d.*, and he was therefore called on for the double duty in order that the single might be recovered, with costs. Poor Dennis declared that he had told the collector that he would pay the duty, and the costs with it, the first day that some money which was due to him should come in. It was very cruel of the collector to bring him here, knowing that he had no wish to evade the duty, and that the bringing him here was enough to ruin his business. It had got abroad already, and he had lost two customers by it. God forbid that he should

be so inconsiderate to the person who had brought him to this by not paying him to the day ! Dennis could not pay the penalty till this person yielded him his due,—not a bit the more for being brought here ; but that person should not be exposed by him as he was exposed in this court, to the destruction of his business. If he should never pay another shilling of duty to the king, the court might ascribe it to his difficulties being laid open in this way,—difficulties which might have been got over easily enough if the court had not stepped in between him and his customers.—The court did not see what it had to do with all this. The single duty, with a small increase for costs, was squeezed out of poor Dennis, who went away, pulling his hat over his eyes, and saying that this would be the signal for his landlord to turn him out of the little shop in which he had carried on his business for many years ; and God only knew where he was to establish himself next.

What could have brought hither that respectable elderly woman, who looked as if she could never in her life have broken a law or a rule ? She came to save her son from a prison, if it might be within her small means to do so. On his coming of age, she had given up to him the small tenement she possessed. She had better have kept it till her death. He had been seduced into a “speculation,” and had set up a private still. The still and all the spirits on the premises were seized, and the mother was now here to pay the penalty of 100*l.* which was just half of the

little portion she had destined for her daughter. She knew that it was more likely that she should have to maintain John than that he would ever repay this 100*l.*, for his character was gone. She cast down her eyes while she held out the money, with a trembling hand, and did not speak to John as they went away, though he looked as if he longed above everything for a word from her. Mrs. Brennan found that much explanation was necessary before Anna could believe that all this ruin was caused by the act of distilling spirits without the leave of the government.

A widow, in shabby mourning, with a babe in her arms, was quietly crying in a corner. She had sold her furniture by auction, and had neglected to get a license. She had better have kept her furniture; for the penalty swallowed up nearly all the proceeds of the sale. Anna thought this the most cruel levy of a tax she had ever heard of; for this poor woman would not have sold her furniture if she had not been in want. To be compelled to pay for permission to do what was in itself a hardship, was a stranger piece of oppression than Anna had witnessed yet,—much as she had seen. She followed the widow, to make sure of the facts, and found that the poor woman had been on the point of setting up a little shop, and sharing a cheap lodging with a brother: but now that her money was almost all gone, she could see nothing before her but selling fruit in the streets; but, in that case, she must look about for some one who would take care of her baby, while the

other two little ones must tramp the streets with her. If she had but sold her furniture in any other way ! But her brother advised an auction, and had taken upon himself to be auctioneer ; and how could she suspect what would happen ?

The wonder was how those to whom the public money came at last could enjoy it if they knew of its being wrung in ways like these from the ignorant, the simple, and the distressed. The old and obvious question recurred,—why not ask the nation for the money that is wanted, instead of filching it ? Why not settle openly how it is to be paid, and take it directly, as rent is taken, or as contributions for any other object are collected ? Surely no objections to this simple method of taxation could long stand when our great nation of buyers and sellers had once found the comfort of natural and regular prices, of wages not arbitrarily and uselessly raised,—the luxury of being rid of the oppression of Custom-houses and Excise courts, and of the plague of a spreading host of revenue spies. Little could be said of the dignity of the circumstances out of which the State funds arise by any one who had seen others of the cases which Anna witnessed, and which really amused her, and beguiled her of her apprehensions for a time. It seemed ridiculous that the king should, by his officers, be seriously complaining of being injured by one man selling pepper without a license, and another removing wine without a permit, and a third having more brandy in his cellar than he declared he had, and a fourth having rum

under a certain strength among his stock, and a fifth forgetting to keep an entry-book, and a sixth tying up his pasteboard in a wrong way, and a seventh having neglected one night to put down how much black tea he had sold in small quantities. It did not seem very dignified in any government to concern itself and worry its subjects about such matters as these. Anna could have laughed once, when the mention of black tea brought her back to a consciousness of her own awkward predicament.

What she had seen had much abated her horror, however. She was able, when called upon, to say that she found she had committed an illegal act, but that she was not the least aware, at the time, that she was doing anything improper, as was shown by her offering some of her thorn leaves to persons who were passing through the field. She could not think it very kind of those persons to pass by without giving her warning of what she was doing. She saw, to be sure, that they looked grave upon her ; but how was she to know why, unless they told her ? In Jersey they would not have treated a stranger so.

" And pray do they make tea of thorn leaves in Jersey ?" asked one of the gentlemen.

" Very rarely, because tea is so cheap there that it would not be worth while ; but anybody may do it that likes. I should not have thought of doing it here but for the dearness of tea ; and I never could have supposed that the custom of the country was first to render tea so dear as to

tempt us to make it for ourselves, and then to punish us for so making it ;—a thing we should never otherwise have thought of."

Studley, on whose information, supported by witnesses, the whole proceeded, smiled maliciously, and said that the young woman showed what family she belonged to by her enmity to the Excise. It went in the family; her brother having absconded to escape an excise charge, and her father being now in prison in consequence of one. This statement made the expected impression. How could the gentlemen do otherwise than think ill of such a family of delinquents ? Studley followed up the matter by declaring what trouble the Excise had with the Le Brocqs. There was no other set of people that he had had to watch so closely; no other premises that he had been obliged to enter so often.

"It is very easy to watch people, Mr. Studley," said Anna, "without showing that they have done wrong; and entering premises by day and night, week after week, does not prove that anything amiss is found there."

"It answers another purpose, if I may say so, gentlemen," interposed Mrs. Brennan. "If an excise officer has a spite against a family, nothing is easier than to take away their character by frequent search, which I believe is what Mr. Studley is trying to do with this family. I wish, gentlemen, that you would ask Mr. Studley what he has found in any of his searches from the day that Mr. Aaron went away."

"Impossible," said one of the commissioners. "We have nothing to do with the character of these people; as you, Studley, ought to have remembered before you entered upon matters with which we have no concern. The charge was admitted. That is all we have to do with."

Studley was ordered to recover a fine,—a small one, for the gentlemen saw something of the nature of the case,—and to destroy or see destroyed the adulterated tea. Anna humbly listened to the unnecessary admonition not to repeat the offence, and then begged the gentlemen to let her father out of prison, where his health was suffering materially from the confinement. This kind of petition must be sent to the Board, accompanied by a medical certificate of the state of the prisoner's health, one of the gentlemen was informing her, when Studley interfered to allege that Le Brocq was well able to pay the fine,—better able than a hundred men who had petitioned the Board in vain for their release.

"If that be the case," said a commissioner, who had a little attention to spare from the case which his colleagues had now called on,—"if that be the case—Is it the case, young woman? Tell me the truth."

"If my father's stock could be sold, he might pay," Anna declared: "but nobody comes to buy; and nobody will come now that Mr. Studley has taken away our good name by following us for evil as he has done."

"He must do his duty. I can hear no com-

plaints against him for doing his duty. If he has given you cause of complaint, you can have redress by applying in the right quarter."

" But, sir, what can I do about the fine ? My mother and I are willing to work night and day to raise the fine, if we knew which way to turn ourselves : but there seems to be so much danger in employments here that we are afraid to begin any new ones."

" O, any one will tell you the law, if it is that you are afraid of. What sort of employment were you thinking of ? "

" My having been asked for so much of my own tea made us think of selling tea and groceries : but I have seen people fined to-day for selling pepper without leave, and having tobacco in a private room, and forgetting to set down at night what they sold in the day, and also for finding that they had more on hand than they had given an account of. I should be afraid, sir, to sell groceries. But there is another thing that was partly put into my head, and partly thought of by myself, owing to our having a great quantity of duty-paid bottles unsold. My mother and I have always been used to make cider, and some kinds of sweet wine. There is talk of a great deal of ginger wine being likely to be drunk this year, for fear of the cholera. We might make it at little risk, as ginger is so cheap an article, and we have the bottles."

" Well : you can but try. You are aware, I suppose, that ginger is not so cheap here as you can get it in Jersey ? Ginger pays duty here."

"And sugar is taxed too, and so is your little matter of spirit, ma'am," interposed Mrs. Brennan. "You must not go to work, reckoning the cost of all your materials at what you might get them for before you came here."

"She may easily learn the prices of things," said the condescending commissioner; "and then she has only to take care to give in her name and place of abode, and of her rooms and utensils; and to renew her license (which will cost two guineas) every year; and to give notice when she intends to draw off her wine; and to be careful not to send it out in less quantities than a whole cask containing fifteen gallons."

Anna looked dismayed, and asked,

"And should we have anything to do with Mr. Studley in that case, sir?"

"If his superiors find that he has reason for suspicion, he may enter at any hour, provided he takes a constable, at night. He may also break walls and pull up floors, if he believes that anything improper in his line is concealed there; but you would be careful to avoid dangers of this kind, and get yourself visited daily, according to law, to obviate suspicion."

"Every day, sir!"

"Yes; if you make wine. If you only retail it, once in twenty-eight days is all you are subject to; and the annual license for mere retailing is only a guinea, the notices and entries being of the same kind required of makers. If you combine the two—"

"I cannot, sir. I dare not. Your gentleman

would be bringing me up and fining me once a week, sir."

"O, you could not get very deep into any scrape, I assure you; the state gets only between two and three thousand pounds from all the sweet-wine makers in the kingdom. There are four who pay less than 1*l.* a year, and no more than six who pay above 100*l.*; and only twenty-three makers altogether. Even the retailers are under nine hundred in number. It is an insignificant concern altogether."

"To the king, perhaps, sir; but not to me, if I have to pay tax upon what my wine is made of, and a tax for making it, and a tax upon the bottles that hold it, and a tax for selling it; and if I am liable to be watched and tormented by Mr. Studley, or men like him. I think, sir, the government might really give up such a vexation, if it brings in so little—so very little."

"And employs a good many people like Mr. Studley, at a hundred a year," added Mrs. Brennan. "I think, ma'am, you must give up your idea of making wine."

"Yes, indeed," replied Anna. "Perhaps, sir, as it is for the king's sake that I am prevented getting money for my father, as I otherwise might; and as you are one of those who manage these affairs, you will not refuse that this letter should go to his majesty. It is from my father, sir, copied by me, and asking no charity at all, but only consulting about what is best for both."

The commissioner was unwilling to let such a curiosity escape. The letter was wafered, so that

he could not ask to glance his eye over it. He would fain keep it, but did not like to deceive the poor girl with false hopes. Anna was pleased to see him hesitate. Studley stopped his laugh of ridicule. Mrs. Brennan could scarcely refrain from nodding triumphantly at him. The commissioner turned from them to say a few words to his colleagues, so that Anna could not see his face. He soon returned, quietly saying,—

"I am not sure that I can get this letter into the king's hands ; but you may leave it with me ; and if your father cannot pay his fine by this day week, you may come here again, and we will consult upon his case. Studley, the fine to which this young woman has made herself liable is remitted. It is clearly a case of remarkable ignorance. The adulterated tea must be destroyed, of course. You will see to it ; but treat her gently, if you please."

The commissioner then explained to Anna that all who were discontented with any decision of his court might seek redress in the Court of Appeal. Anna found it difficult to understand exactly what was meant. The only clear idea she carried away was that nobody ever applied to his Court of Appeal ; so that most people began to wish that it might be done away as one of the useless burdens of the Excise. She was sure that she should not be the next person to appeal. The court might be done away for anything she had to say against it. Its being seldom or never applied to seemed to show that the court she was now in was thought to conduct its business well ;

but it appeared to her that it would be a happy thing to sweep away both, and all excise jurisdiction whatsoever.

"Where is Brennan?" asked Anna, when she and her companion had made their low curtsies, and turned round, with lightened hearts, to go away.

"He was off some time since," Mrs. Brennan replied; "to run and tell your mother how matters were going, I dare say. They have been merciful to you, ma'am; and I give you joy."

"O, Mrs. Brennan, I think I never will dread anything again. I have often said so before, finding what I most dreaded come to a very little. I never was so frightened in my life before; but I really will try never to be afraid again."

She spoke a moment too soon.

"And what do you want with us pray, Mr. Studley?" inquired Mrs. Brennan, perceiving that that person walked close to Anna, as if he regarded her as more or less in his custody.

"Going to discharge my duty," replied Studley. "The adulterated tea is to be publicly destroyed, you know, as bad books are burned by the common hangman."

"Publicly!" repeated Anna, in consternation. "Where? How?"

"In your father's yard. There cannot be a more convenient place for a bonfire."

"Do you mean to burn the tea in sight of all the neighbours?"

"That depends on whether they choose to

look. I shall certainly not try to hang up any sort of blind."

"I wonder at you, ma'am," said Mrs. Brennan, "that you go on asking him questions, just to give him the pleasure of making sharp answers."

Anna said no more. She was thrown back into her former state of trepidation. It was as much as she could do to walk straight. Mrs. Brennan seemed to think it a waste of time (or perhaps she considered it bad for Anna) to keep silence for so long a space. She began talking of her boy, and fished for a few compliments for him; but her companion seemed strangely careless of what she was saying.

"What a smell of burning!" Mrs. Brennan exclaimed when they drew near the pottery-yard. All three looked round for tokens of fire; and Studley observed that one might have thought the furnaces were all employed, as they had been in his time. Smoke was coming out of the window of the kitchen, and even oozing from under the door. Anna really believed that the place was on fire, and exclaimed accordingly; when Brennan put his head out at the window, and Mrs. Le Brocq opened the door. Both seemed terribly heated, and made a display of scorched cheeks which would have done honour to a Christmas fire. It was evident from their looks that nothing was the matter.

"Let me in," said Studley, in a voice of authority. "Clear a space in the yard for the fire. Boy, call the workmen (if there be any now-a-days) to clear the yard for the burning; and if

nobody is on the premises, fetch some of the neighbours."

"What may you be pleased to be going to burn?" asked the boy, briskly.

"My tea," faltered Anna. "Come this way, Mr. Studley, and I will show you the cupboard where every grain of it is; and if you have any kindness in you, you will be quick with the job, and finish it before the neighbours can gather about us. Mother," continued she, as she entered the kitchen, whose atmosphere was rapidly clearing, "what have you been about? The hearth is piled up with ashes as high as the grate, and the grate is heaped half way up the chimney; and you look ready to faint with the heat and the vapour."

"Mistress won't mind it, since we have got done in time," observed the boy, cheerfully; and then he began humming a tune. Studley had meanwhile advanced in slow dignity to the place which Anna had indicated to him. There was nothing in it. While he took an astonished survey of the shelves, Brennan went on from his humming to singing, and his words were some that every child is familiar with,—

"And when she came there,
The cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none."

"The poor dog, ha, ha!" repeated Mrs. Brennan, laughing. "And so the poor dog had none! So he put his tail between his legs, and slunk away, I dare say. Did not he, my dear?"

Studley was now obliged to do something very like this. The boy had been quick. The moment he heard the tea condemned to destruction by the court, he ran with all speed to discharge Studley's errand for him. The last packet of tea was smouldering when he heard Anna's exclamation that there must be a fire somewhere. Studley would have Mrs. Le Brocq's tea-caddy brought down; and he fingered and smelled the contents. They were perfectly unexceptionable; and nothing remained for him but to go away. He felt to his back-bone the slam of the door behind him, and to the bottom of his soul the significance of the buzz of voices that came through the open window as he passed it. That Anna should escape thus easily was the last thing he had designed. And what an impudent little wretch that boy was, to be insulting him,—so lately his superior at the pottery,—with his nursery rhymes! All day, nothing would stay in Studley's head but

“The cupboard was bare,
And so the poor dog had none.”

CHAPTER IV.

FRIEND OR FOE?

THOUGH Anna's adventure in the court had ended much less unpleasantly than she had expected, she had no strong inclination to appear

upon the scene again. The words "this day week" were for ever on her mind; and hour by hour she revolved the possibilities and improbabilities of her father being able to discharge the fine within the time specified. The first day passed over pretty well. Her mother and she were full of the satisfaction of her own escape. On the second day, they consulted about advertising their stock again, and wished they had done it yesterday. Anna went to get the Durells' opinions; but nobody was at home except the maid, who could or would give no account of her master and mistress, and was not over civil in her manner. Night came before the question of advertising or not advertising was settled; and the next morning, Mrs. Le Brocq seemed rather disposed to have an auction, at which the stock, the household furniture, and the pottery business might be all sold together, so that the family might be off for Jersey the moment Le Brocq should be released. Anna was alarmed at the idea of an auction, fearing some difficulty or danger about the duty. Mr. Durell had offered to assist her with his knowledge of excise law, in all cases of need; and once more she sought him. This time the Durells were at home: but the maid scarcely opened the door three inches, and was positive that her master and mistress could see no person whatever, even for two minutes. Jack's face was visible for an instant, peeping under the maid's arm; but, on being spoken to, he disappeared behind her skirts, and would not be

persuaded to show himself again. Mrs. Le Brocq was more bent than ever on having the auction when her daughter came home bringing no opinion against it. She had got a glimpse of the prospect of seeing her Louise again, and had much to say that had been said often before on the hardship of not having seen poor Louise ever since the first week of her marriage. Who could tell whether, if this auction should go off well, she might not, even yet, be with Louise before her confinement? She was not sparing of her reproaches to Anna because she would not begin her preparations this very evening : but Anna would do nothing without consulting her father, whom she could not see till the next afternoon ; and so the third day passed without progress being made towards paying the fine, and there was every prospect of the fourth elapsing without any further advance than the formation of a plan. Her mother hurried her away, when the time drew near for her visit to her father ; and so did her own inclination ; though she hardly expected that the prison-doors would be opened any sooner on account of her impatience. Her mother and she had better have been more reasonable. She had not been gone more than four minutes, (and she had to wait ten at the prison gate,) before a stranger arrived on business. He came from the Board of Excise, on a little affair which would be easily transacted,—over in a quarter of an hour ; there was no occasion to trouble any of the family further than just to show him the way to the

stock-room. His people were behind with the cart; and he had desired them to be as quiet as possible, and give no trouble. He was an excise officer, come for the purpose of levying the fine for which Mr. Le Brocq was now imprisoned.

Nothing could exceed the old lady's consternation. Her first idea was that it would be politic to carry herself high. She therefore declared that she could not think of admitting a stranger on any such errand. Mr. Durell was the gentleman they always employed on this kind of occasion.

The officer half smiled while he explained that it was the Board, and not traders, who were said to employ officers on excise business; and the Board must choose what officers it would send on particular pieces of service. He was aware that Mr. Durell was an intimate friend of the family; but Mr. Durell would not be seen by them on this occasion.

"And now, ma'am, here come our people. If you will just show us the way, as I said, we will not trouble you to stay. You may trust the affair to me. I have orders to be considerate; and you shall have no reason to complain. I will look in upon you when we have done, and leave with you the order for release, which you will allow me to wish you joy of."

No such thing. Mrs. Le Brocq saw no joy in the affair. Here was Studley: there was the cart with another attendant; and her husband's beautiful jars and filterers were being handed into it, to be carried off. She declared she

would appeal to the neighbours. She would raise the neighbourhood.

"Let me advise you not, madam. I have desired my men,—Studley, be more quiet, will you?—I have desired my men to make no disturbance: and, if you make none, the neighbours will take us for customers, and you will be spared all disagreeable remarks. Be quick, Studley!"

Mrs. Le Brocq loudly exclaimed that they might well desire quietness when they came like thieves to carry away her property. They had good reason to fear being mobbed; and mobbed they should be. The officer quietly and civilly showed his warrant, and cited that clause of the Act which provides that all persons who oppose, molest, or otherwise hinder any officer of excise in the execution of his duty, shall respectively, for every such offence, forfeit two hundred pounds. The good woman dared do nothing worse after this than turn her back upon the trio and their occupation, and shut herself into her house. There she sat, rocking herself in her great chair, and not even knitting, when, in less than a quarter of an hour, the officer tapped at the door, and requested admittance. At first, she would not hear; and when she dared be deaf no longer, she became lame, and made him wait, on account of her rheumatism, as long as she possibly could. It gave him pleasure, he said good-humouredly, to deliver to her the order he held in his hand, his little business being now finished. Her hands were too busy, as she pretended, fumbling under

her apron, to be at liberty to take the note. She bade him carry it back to those that sent it ; and when he declined doing this, she sullenly nodded towards a table where he might lay it down. He obeyed orders, touched his hat, and departed.

She was still rocking herself in her great chair when Anna returned.

" O, mother, what has happened now ? " cried Anna, seeing that matters had gone wrong during her absence. " Mother, speak ! Have the Excise been upon us again ? "

" To be sure : carrying off all we were going to sell by auction. They want to put me into prison, too. I shall never see Louise more."

" O, mother, did they say so ? " cried Anna, sinking into a chair. " I hope, at least, they will put you beside my father ;—and me, too," she faltered, as the idea crossed her of her being left alone on the premises, her parents in prison, and the Durells, from some cause, inaccessible. " Mother, how could they have the heart to tell you that you must go to prison ? Was it Studley ? I suppose it was Studley. And when, mother ? When—"

Her mother let her go on tormenting herself till the frequent repetition of the question " when ? " compelled her to admit that nobody had exactly said that she was to go to prison. But they could mean nothing else by robbing her of all that she had left. By degrees it came out that Studley had been very quiet, and in fact had said nothing at all ; that if he had, it should have been the worse for him ; that the officer who

was set over him would not soon forget his visit, for Mrs. Le Brocq had shown him, when he offered that bit of paper (lying on the table there) that she would not touch with a pair of tongs anything brought by him.

Without the intervention of a pair of tongs, Anna took up the paper. Minute after minute, she stood with it in her hand, her mother not condescending to take any notice. She leaned against the table, and again began to ponder it, the intent of the whole proceeding opening upon her more and more distinctly.

"I could wish, mother," said she at length, "that the gentleman had asked you to read this paper, or had told you something of what it means, that we might not seem to the Board to be ungrateful. As far as I can make out,—I am pretty sure,—our fine is paid, and my father may come home directly."

Mrs. Le Brocq was in due amazement: but, when she had taken out her spectacles, and read the order for the release of her husband, his fine being paid, she comforted herself about her own manners by observing upon the improbability of her receiving any civility from the Excise; and that, after all, there was no occasion to thank them for letting her husband out of prison, when they had done him such a wrong as ever to put him in. She now found that it was possible for her to get as far as the prison; a thing hitherto not to be thought of. Anna would gladly have left her behind, so impatient was she of every moment which must elapse before her father could

know of his release. Her mother was terribly long in getting herself ready for her walk ; and such a walk Anna had never undergone, except in a dream. At last the moment came when the door of the well-known apartment was opened before her.

She had hitherto seen her father only at an hour when she was expected ; and then he was always sitting at the table, or pacing up and down the room. She now found him lying at length along a bench, his face resting on his hands.

"He is ill!" cried Anna, pressing forward.

"Far from it, ma'am," said the man who had offered to sell her a sheet of paper. "No worse than usual, ma'am. That is the way that he spends most of his time, except when he is expecting you ; and then, who could look doleful?"

Le Brocq had started off his bench on hearing Anna's voice, and shaken himself, to get rid of his sloth or his emotion, whichever it might be that kept him lying there. When he saw his wife, he was sure that something remarkable had happened ; and most probably of a disastrous nature : for Mrs. Le Brocq's leading taste, next to knitting, was for telling bad news. He was not sorry, however, to find that good news would serve her turn when there was no bad to be had.

It is surprising how people get good manners without teaching,—some very suddenly, on particular occasions of their lives. Le Brocq had been considered by his prison companions an under-bred, churlish sort of person : but now he was full of courtesy, from the moment he knew

that he was going to leave them. He hoped they would find the improved space and air they would have in consequence of his absence a great advantage. He sincerely trusted that nobody else would be put there to intrude upon them as he had done. He was flattered at the groaning sigh and melancholy look with which this was received, not suspecting the nature of the regrets felt by his comrades,—regrets after the dominoes which he had not forgotten to pocket, and after the relief they had enjoyed from the irksomeness of double dumbie, if they played whist at all. They would now have willingly buried in oblivion all the faults of his playing, for which they had often pronounced him to his face incorrigibly stupid,—all would they gladly have forgiven and forgotten, if he could but have stayed to save them from double dumbie. But it could not be. Le Brocq was on the point of saying that he should be very happy to see them if ever they should chance to be travelling near his place in Jersey; but he remembered in time what was due to his family, and what had arisen already out of the visit of one questionable personage. He was sorry now that he had beguiled some irksome hours with exact accounts, perhaps too tempting, of his farm, and of his mode of life in Jersey, with all its advantages; and when his prison-mates asked what he meant to do with himself now, he gave an answer implying an intention to remain in London,—not a little to the dismay of his wife and daughter.

He seemed, when he came out, to be suddenly

smitten with London. Brennan was walking outside, with a smiling face. He had been thinking he might carry his master's clothes to Le Brocq was sure there was no such place as London for having little services done for you almost before you can wish for them.—The boy crossed one of the bridges. Really, he believed there could be no such river in the world as a river in London; and he defied anybody to match St. Paul's as he saw it now.—What a beautiful sunny evening it was! How the sun shone and glistened on the water! His wife, who was passing by, and blowing, wished it was not so hot; but Anna ventured to hint that he might perhaps think the more of these things from having been shut up so long. For her part, she liked a walk of the sea better than any river. This hint brought her sober father into an ecstacy about a strayed dog; notwithstanding which, it was still difficult to get him off the bridge. When this was accomplished, however, the shops and caravans did as well; and a bunch of fresh flowers from the greengrocer's made him mentally drunk.

Thinking him now in the best mood for friendliness, they paused when they came to the turn which led to Durell's house, and proposed that they should go round, and tell their friends the good news.

"Ay, to be sure," replied her father. "It would be a pity to go home yet,—such an evening as it is."

Brennan observed that he could still do something more, now he was so near the place. If Miss Anna would trust him with the boy,

he would step on with the things. Anna gave him also the key of the house-door, and asked him to see that the kettle boiled by the time she should arrive to make tea. She saw by her father's countenance that the very words were delicious to him, and he owned as much as that nothing gave such an appetite as the fresh air.

"But I am sure Mrs. Durell is at home," said Anna, when the little girl once more declined letting anybody in. "I saw her cap as I passed the window. Tell her, my dear, that if she is offended with us, we wish she would tell us why; and, whether she is offended or not, I should like to see her for two minutes, to tell her something that I am sure she would be pleased to hear."

The little girl looked behind her, and Mrs. Durell appeared, thin, and anxious-looking. She cast a glance up and down the street before she spoke, and then merely said that there was no quarrel; that her husband was ill and out of spirits; she would thank them to be so good as not to come in now; and as soon as she could, she would call in upon them, or send to know if Anna could spare her a quarter of an hour. But not now.

"We could not now, Mrs. Durell. Here is my father—going home with us to tea, you see. We have a great deal to tell you; and perhaps we shall have but a short time to tell it in. You must come and talk with us about Jersey. But I am sorry Mr. Durell is ill. Is it only just to-day? or has he been ill long?"

"He has had enough to make him ill these ten

days. God knows what will become of us. But he has done nothing wrong, Anna, if you will believe me. Good bye, my dear. I can tell you any more now."

"Poor Mrs. Durell!" sighed Anna, as she left the door. "I wonder what has happened now. I am sure it is something very terrible. But I knew she could not have quarrelled with us."

"Poor woman!" said Le Brocq, complacently. "This evening would be hardly the time for a quarrel with us, however it might have been started while I was away. They will keep on terms with us now, I dare say. Poor woman! She looks very pale. She looks as if she had been shut up. She cannot have been much out of doors lately, I fancy. Ah, ha! Here we are near the soapery. We are near home now. That is the great ladle still! You have let the stand, I see."

"I hope it will stand there long after we have gone out of the way of the soapery and the tery, and all the places here," Anna ventured to say.

What could be the reason that they could get into the house? Brennan was not at home, and the door was locked. On looking through the window, the clothes-bag might be seen near the fire was blazing, so that he had certainly been home. What could have become of him and his key? It was impossible to be angry with any body this evening; so Anna found a seat for her mother in the yard, and she and her father

to the rear to look at the river from the wharf. There was so much to see and admire as the boats put off and returned, so much wondering how that wooden-legged waterman would manage to keep his footing, so much speculation as to whence such and such vessels came, and whither they were going, that tea was forgotten, after all, till Brennan came running to tell them that it was ready.

"There, now ; this is what I call comfortable," declared Le Brocq, as he entered the parlour, and saw, not only tea, but a pile of hot cakes and a jar of flowers. "How in the world do you get such flowers here ? They might have grown in a Jersey meadow."

"They seem to me the same that you admired in the shop as we passed," said Anna. "And I know the pattern of the jar. It is one that Brennan has been making after his own fancy."

Le Brocq could not but have thought this jar a very beautiful one, in any of his moods. This evening he was disposed to pronounce it the most elegant that had ever proceeded from any pottery ; but Brennan modestly disclaimed this. It did not come up to the one that put the idea of this into his head,—one that he had seen at the British Museum.

"Bring the other one that you made after this," said Anna ; who explained to her father that there was one other jar which Brennan himself thought superior to this ; and that a third had come off the wheel this morning which was likely to be the best of all. These jars were all

the boy's own property, as he had paid by extra work for the clay and the use of the apparatus. The boy did not bring the second jar, for the good reason that it was no longer within reach. He had parted with it to the green-grocer for the flowers, and money enough to buy these hot buttered cakes.

It was difficult to make the boy sit down to table near his own flowers; and then he was too modest to be easily persuaded to taste his own cakes. It was not for himself that he got them, he said.

"Did you ever get anything for yourself?" Anna inquired of him.

"O, yes, ma'am; many a time."

"What was the last thing you got for yourself?"

"Some new runners for the jars. If you please to look, ma'am, this here is a new pattern quite."

"If you had a great deal of money, what would you do with it?"

"I would belong to the Mechanics' Institution, and learn to draw; and then I might get the prize,—a good many guineas."

"And what would you do with those guineas,—help your mother, or marry a wife, or what?"

"I would get some marble to cut. Marble is very dear, they say; but I saw a good many marble things in the British Museum."

Le Brocq, always ready with a word against Durell, wished he had taken the boy anywhere but to the British Museum, if he must meddle

with him at all. He had heard the proper place to take boys to for a holiday was Sadler's Wells. If he had gone there, Brennan would have had no extravagant notions about getting marble, or anything else that would come in the way of his being a good potter; and he reminded Brennan that the Scripture told of a potter at the wheel.

Anna looked at the jar before her, and wondered whether it would have been produced if the boy had been taken to Sadler's Wells instead of the British Museum.

" You had better be a journeyman potter, boy," said Le Brocq. " You may make money by informing against your master, if you watch him closely enough."

Brennan coloured indignantly, and only said he should like to cut things in marble, because the excise had nothing to do with that, he believed. When the marble was once paid for, duty and all, there was no more meddling from anybody.

" You had better go with us to Jersey, then, if you don't like the excise; and there you will be free of the customs too. There you may get what you want, without paying even duty. You had better go with us to Jersey."

Neither Anna nor her mother attempted to conceal her delight at the mention of going back to Jersey; whereupon Le Brocq put on a grave countenance of deliberative wisdom, and, promising that he had no wish to exclude so discreet a boy as Brennan from hearing what he had to say, went on to declare that his conscience had

long been uneasy about uncle Anthony. He could not approve of displeasure going so far as to deprive son of his father's flourishing business, ing it to comparative strangers.

"O, father, that is the best word said since uncle Anthony died!" Anna, with clasped hands. "That is, tinued, recollecting that she had uttered of extraordinary freedom, "I have w long while, that you might be thinking of how we came into this business, an it did not rightfully belong to another."

"One could not see in a day what legacy it would prove," observed L "and I have no doubt that, though it actly the thing to suit us, it will be as fness to those who have been brought taxed country as uncle Anthony sai Uncle Anthony did very wrong in leavin property from his only son. The wor have been if, being so bequeathed, th had prospered. The proper thing to to find out where the young man is, an directly to him to come and take posse

"And if he will not come?" said Brocq, dreading delay.

"If he will not come, he must disp business in his own way. That is his mine."

"Then you do not mean to wait t hear from America? I am very glad, Anna, "It would take some month

all about the giving up the property, as the owner is so far off. I am very glad you do not mean to wait."

"I cannot think of waiting for him; or any longer than to settle two or three little affairs. Brennan, what has been done about those bottles that are to go abroad? that large order for bottles, you know."

"They are almost ready, sir. We have been doing our best for them with the few hands we have: and they may be got off this week, if you so please, sir."

"Very well. I shall just finish that and one or two others of the larger orders before I date my letter, and make an auction of the furniture; and then write my letter and be off."

"Of this furniture?" said Anna, looking round her.

"To be sure. Then this boy's mother, or somebody, will either come in, or agree to look after the place till the young man arrives or writes."

"But," said Anna, timidly, "if the business is rightfully his, are not the orders and the furniture his too? I thought we should have to pay him, if he requires it, for using his right so long."

Le Brocq muttered that he ought rather to be paid for all that he had gone through with the pottery business, though he could not fix the payment which would compensate to him for what he had suffered. But he had no doubt, as he said before, that the young man would make

a fine thing of it; and the young man should have it.

"Then we shall go very soon indeed, shall we?" said Anna. "Brennan does not like to hear us say so."

The boy did indeed look grieved. He was too modest to interrupt their deliberations with the question what was to become of him; but it was struggling in his heart. Perceiving him just about to give way, Anna asked him to see whether it was a dog that was making a little noise against the door. Before he could get to the door, there was a shout which informed them that it was not a dog but a child. Jack Durell was not tall enough to reach the knocker, and he had tried pushing and tapping in vain; so now he shouted,

"Father says you are to come directly, and hear the damned bad treatment the people have given him."

"Hush, my dear! hush!" cried Anna. "That is not the way you should ask us to go."

"That was what father bade me tell you,—that you are to come directly, and hear ——"

"Well, well: we will come. Did your father mean all of us, or which of us?"

"You are all to come directly. Father says every body shall know."

"'Tis his turn with these fellows now, I suppose," Le Brocq observed, looking rather pleased than otherwise. "Come, wife."

Mrs. Le Brocq was still sipping her tea. As she cast her eye over the table, and saw how

tempting the remnants of the cakes looked, she felt a distaste to moving away. She sent a long apologetic message to the Durells about being very tired after the agitations consequent on her husband's release, [and was left behind, much to her own satisfaction.

CHAPTER V.

THE DARKENING HOUR.

How strange it is that the inanimate objects with which people surround themselves appear, even to strangers, to put on a different aspect according to the mood of those whom they surround. It is quite as much the case with the scenery of a house as with that which is not filled and arranged by the hand of man. The natural landscape varies in its aspects from other causes than the vicissitudes of clouds and sunshine. There may be a human being sitting in the midst, through sympathy with whose moods the observer may find the noon sunshine oppressive, or may feel his spirit dance with the brook, or carol with the birds under the murkiest sky. An infant's glee at the lightning may almost make the thunderstorm a sport; and the full moon may shed no light into the soul of one who is watching with the mourner. So it is with the artificial scenery of our houses. There areague-fits of the spirit when the crackling fire

imparts no glow of mirth : and the coldest and dingiest of apartments may, when illuminated with happy faces, put on something of the light and warmth of a palace. Durell's dwelling had always appeared to Anna a very cheerful one.—with the employments of an active mistress and a willing maid ; Mary's work-bag on the table, or its contents scattered under a chair, as it might be : Jack's toys heaped up in one corner ; drawings by the hands of many fair friends hung round the room ; and Durell's flute lying with his music books and a few of the poets on the book shelves. Thus were they arranged this evening ; and there was a small clear fire, and a sufficiency of light ; and yet the aspect of the apartment struck as deep a sense of gloom on Anna's heart as the scene of her father's imprisonment had ever done. The children were not there ; Mary keeping by Betty's side in the kitchen, officiously helping, in order to escape being called to her work in the parlour ; and Jack slinking away as soon as his errand was discharged, to look for Stephen, he said. There were only Mrs. Durell, hovering about her husband, with a countenance in which there was as much terror as grief ; and Durell himself, in his easy chair, looking so wasted, and even decrepit, as to make the Le Brocqs doubt, for a moment, whether he was the man they came to see. Anna did not attempt to conceal that she was shocked, and asked Mrs. Durell why she had not sent to their house for aid.

Her husband's illness had come on so rapidly,

she said, that she had scarcely known what to do : and he had been so unwilling to see any person whatever ! Besides, it was only within a few hours that he had sunk to what they saw him now. Every ten minutes lowered him ; and, notwithstanding what the doctor said, she did not know how to disbelieve her husband when he declared himself that he was dying.

" His eye is not the eye of a dying man," said Anna,—the only consolation she could give. " Unless it has lighted up with our coming in——"

" It is not so," replied her friend. " His eyes have been as bright as diamonds all to-day ; and, I think, quite unnatural. O, my dear, if you could help me to find out what should be done for him——His heart is quite broken——"

She could not go on.

" I was afraid, by the message he sent——"

" O, my dear, that was nothing to what I have seen him go through. If you had been here when he threw himself on the floor because they told him he would never be allowed to serve the king or his country in any way again ; if you had heard his prayer for those he must not serve, you would not wonder at his being as you see him now."

" I am sorry to find you looking poorly, sir," said Le Brocq, feeling that he was making a stretch of complaisance, but having in his mind something about not trampling on a fallen enemy. " I suppose these excise devils have been plaguing you as——as——"

"Perhaps, as you are so boar's; Mr. I
you had better leave telling us that till a
time."

"No!" cried he, forcing his voice. "I
tell you, and I will, what their messages
The first was that my business was to do
not to think; and that, whatever may be
my part is to be silent and obedient. That
pretty message to a free-born man! Then
out of what I said at the election where I
not vote; and of my defending is afterwile
your house."

"O, dear! that is a great pity!"

"Not at all a pity, sir; I don't say
syllable I said there. I am only sorry (as
as they are), that they did not hear of
election affair before three months were over.
Why?—Because then they could have
worse with me than sending me a reprimand."

power,—without any body supposing any thing but that I died, as other people die, in their beds."

"But you will not die yet. You are almost a young man. You must not think of dying yet."

"Only with a hope to live," interposed Anna, to whom it was painful to hear people told that they must not think of dying.

"Hope to live!" exclaimed Durell, contemptuously. "What should I hope for? The only prospect that could ever have tempted me to make myself one of their vile crew, they have blighted and blasted. They took care I should know, after that election business, that I should never rise any higher,—that the best I had to expect was to be graciously allowed,—in return for promising not to think, but to be silent and obedient,—to go on being a king's spy and a rader's tormentor for life,—to keep my wife and children alive with scanty bread soaked in the ears of my degraded and broken manhood. This is what they offered in return for my promising not to think, but to be silent and obedient."

"They little knew whom they were speaking to, indeed," observed Anna.

"Did not they know they were speaking to a man? There are some men that would sooner catch an ant-hill than a hidden distillery, and that think of a lark's nest when they wake in the morning, and are apt to be looking out after the stars when they should be asleep: and there are others that are never so happy as when they are

smelling out soap, and sending a panic before them. The rulers have nothing to do with these men's different tastes, as long as the poet and the meddler both do their work. But both these, and all between them, are men: and it is a foul crime to strip them of their sight and their strength,—of their reason and their will: and if it be true that the service they are on requires such outrage, it only follows that the service itself is foul. If it would but please God to restore me my strength for a little while, I would find a way yet to pull down their despotism upon their own heads."

He made an effort to rise, but the ground seemed unsteady beneath his feet, and he sank down again.

"They have struck me a deeper blow still," said he, "or you would not see me as I am now. They have believed in my dishonour, on the information of a scoundrel. They believe that you have bribed me."

"That was the reason why my husband could not think of seeing you before: the only reason," Mrs. Durell was in haste to explain. "But it is over now. They have turned him off, on what Mr. Studley said; and now they want him to be thankful that he is not fined 500*l.* Thank God we have done with them, I say. We shall be able—"

"We have not done with them. We shall not be able," cried Durell. "The hounds can hunt me out of my rest wherever I may choose to seek it. They boast that they can. They give

me notice that if ever I make an attempt to serve my country, they shall bring out their evidence to prove me incapable of ever holding any office or place of trust under the king."

"But if they cannot do it, Mr. Durell?" suggested Anna.

"They can. Ay: you look surprised: but they can. I never forgot my honour. I never took a bribe; for you know that your Jersey pie and ale were no bribe. But they can prove against me some things which they can no more pardon than I can pardon certain of their practices. If a base wretch joins a better man in evading the law, and then turns traitor, he is excused and rewarded: but if a man with a heart in his bosom gives a friendly warning to the careless, or passes over the first offence of the widow that toils for her little ones, he is under ban, and can never again serve his king. Such things they may prove against me."

"I doubt whether you may not still serve the king better than you have done yet," observed Anna. "I cannot call it doing the king any service to make the people hate their duty to him, and to teach them to defraud him. People should love their king very strongly, for instance, to wish to yield him their cheerful duty through all that my father has undergone in paying his taxes. If you do not collect the king's money any more, there are other ways of doing him service, which must be open to such a man as you are. Whatever makes his kingdom a more honourable and a happier place; whatever

makes his subjects a better or more contented people, is, in my mind, a true and faithful service of the king."

"That is what I have been saying," observed Mrs. Durell.

"And what was my answer?" said her husband: "that not all that the wisest and the most true-hearted of the people can do to promote science, and public and private morality, can make any stand against what these——"

"Pray do not call them names," entreated Anna. "They are men,—men said to be of honour and principle, whose lot it is to administer a bad system which they did not make. Do not let us blame them till we see that they take no pains to alter that which they cannot approve."

"Well: call them men or devils, or what you will. They administer a system which is enough of itself to keep us back in knowledge and art till all the world besides has passed us, and to do worse for our morals than all our clergy can cure. I can prove it. As for knowledge, only look at the paper tax, keeping books and newspapers out of the reach of those who want them most, and stinting the class above them of their fair share of that which God has given every man as free a right to as to the air of heaven. As for art,—when was there a nobler triumph of it than when man fixed a yellow star out above the sea, to gleam on the souls of thousands of tempest-tost wretches, like the gospel they trusted in, and to give the wanderer 'This far welcome home?'"

"Indeed we can say that," said Anna. "Such a light through the fog was the best sight we saw in all the sea, in coming ; and I never shut my eyes to sleep now but I could fancy I see that light, hoping to pass under it before long."

"Well : there might now be a light far better than that, or any light that yet hangs above the sea; a light that would shine through the thickest fog, like a morsel of the copper sun that rises on an October morning,—a light that would save thousands of poor wretches that must now go down into the deeps with the moans of their orphaned little ones in their ears : and this light we may not use."

"Because of the excise?"

"For no other reason. Glasses of a new construction would be required for the lighthouses : and this new construction is not such as is set down in the excise laws. No glass-maker dares venture it, and the only hope is that we may get some foreign nation to do it for us."

Anna thought it was a poor way of serving the king to drown his subjects, and employ foreigners to work upon discoveries made at home,—and all under pretence of taking care of the money of the state.

"This is only one instance out of many," Durell declared. "As for what I said about morality, I know of cheats enough to fill a jest book."

"A jest-book!" said his wife, in a tone of remonstrance.

"Nay, my dear, it is their fault, not mine, if,

when they have sharpened wits to cheat, witty cheats are laughed at as good jokes. year, a very good joke was spoiled. The who made it laughed in their sleeves as lon it went on ; and when it came out, every else laughed, the excise and all, though crime is really as great as robbing the wid her mite, since the widow's mite must g make up for the fraud. There is no dut soap in Ireland ; and some cunning English who had made soap without paying the packed it up for Ireland, got the drawback 28*l.* a ton, just as if they had paid the duty sent it off, smuggled it back again, pack afresh, got the drawback again, and sent i and again smuggled it back ; and so on, times over. Now, for the idea of this chea the lies that were told, for the false oaths were taken in carrying it on, and for the ma a sordid crime into a joke, the excise is ans able. And this is what the excise does morality."

"And this is the way the money of the p is managed," observed Le Brocq ; "wren from the honest working man with one h that it may be given away to the fraudulent trader with the other!"

Mrs. Durell had been well pleased at the the conversation had taken, seeing that, whil husband's attention was occupied with matte detail, he resumed more and more of his countenance, voice and manner. There was fierceness in his eye, less effort in his sp

and he sat almost upright. But Le Brocq spoiled all.

"I cannot but wonder at you, Durell, especially as you are a Jerseyman, that you, knowing the system so well, should have left it to the gentlemen to turn you out."

"Wonder at me!" said Durell, after a pause, during which he could not speak. "Wonder at me! Why don't you curse me and loathe me for being an abject wretch, for the sake of my children's bread? I thank God for taking their bread from them before my eyes, if it teaches them to despise their father and their father's business."

"O, husband!" cried Mrs. Durell.

"I mean what I say," he continued, with a forced calmness of voice and manner. "I am going to leave them—to leave them in your charge; and I command you to bring them up in horror of everything that is dishonest, and vile, and cruel; and if you bring them up to abhor everything that is dishonest, and vile, and cruel, you must bring them up either to forget their father and his employments, or to despise him for being so employed. I give you your choice, and only pray God that I may hide myself in my grave before either comes to pass."

"Don't listen to him. Don't believe him," cried the wife, turning first to Le Brocq, and then to Anna. "You see he is not himself; you see he is talking like—"

"Like a man who is waking from a morning dream," said her husband, whose excited senses

caught looks and words which were not intended for him. "I am not drunk, Le Brocq, though I have no right to complain if you fancy me so; and I am not mad."

"But angry,—very angry," Anna ventured to interpose.

"Well; if I have been angry, it has nothing to do with what I am going to say, which is about you and yours, Le Brocq, with whom I have no cause to be angry. I am like a man waking from a dream; and I see many things that I wish it had pleased God that I should see long ago."

"You cannot say you have no cause to be angry with us," cried Le Brocq, moved by a sudden impulse of sensibility; "that is, with me. Anna has always been your friend; and if my wife has not, it is only because she has copied me. I have doubted you all along till now; and I am very sorry for it."

"Doubted my honour?" asked Durell, bitterly.

"Doubted your being the friend you professed yourself. I thought that you might, with the power of your office, have prevented some of the misfortunes that have befallen us. But now I find—"

"Now you find that I have been a slave, obliged to stand by, and see those punished that I would fain have saved. Now you find that an exciseman must choose his friends by their trades, if there be any trades that the curse of his employment does not light upon. We used to think that God has shown how friendships should arise,

—shown it by the meeting of the eyes that glance sympathy; and the grasp of the hands when men find that they had the same birth-place. But the power that has stepped in between us has set aside God's arrangements altogether. You and I gathered nuts, as children, in the same deep lanes, and played about the same poquelaye; but as soon as I would have grasped hands upon this, what happened? You believed it the grasp of a traitor, and our enemies said we were giving and taking a bribe; and between you both, I am sunk to perdition, body and soul."

"But that is all over now. Nobody will think any more——"

"It will never be over. The stain will be as lasting as the record of my name in the creation. When people shall see me carried to my grave, a few days hence, they will remember how they saw me last carried through the streets,—a brute, lower than the lowest of all other brutes. When they meet my wife in her weeds, they will look into her face to see if there is not joy hidden under it, because her torment of a husband is gone."

"Do stop him. I cannot bear it," said Mrs. Durell, putting her hands before her face.

"You will bear it very well, my dear. It is true, you will have no bread to give your children; and when you beg it, people will stop to consider whether they ought to help the children of the dissolute exciseman; but all this will not set against the relief of having got rid of the wretch himself. Ah! you don't think so now, because

you p e, as you would pity a sickly child ; —
you j ie for sitting drooping here, with a
perish arcase and a worn-out spirit. But I
don't your pity. I won't be treated like a
child—ay—"

He rose from his chair, and took a few strides towards his wife, evidently in a state of delirium. The urgency of the occasion seemed to inspire Le Brocq timent which suited the mome

"I say, Mr. being made a man than other men ; so I a you had better sit down — I am going back to messages for your old fri

d he, "no man likes id I like it no better sing back, — come, gain ; take my arm; sey. Have you any s there ? "

"To Jersey : ay ; you are right there, Le Brocq. That was what I was going to say. Don't stay here, where there is more misery caused by mere paying taxes than there is in Jersey by all God's dark providences together. Go and tell them, whatever they do," he continued, settling himself in his chair again, — "tell them, whatever they do, not to dare, for the sake of raising money for the state, to crush the simple and high-minded, and exalt the mean and crafty—"

"Ay ; Studley ! How that fellow is flourishing at the expense of us all !" cried Le Brocq.

Anna marked the flashing of Durell's eyes at the name, and interposed.

"We shall soon be settled in our farm again, Mr. Durell ; and perhaps you will be well enough

to come and see us by the time we begin shaking the trees in the orchard."

"Shaking the trees in the orchard," repeated Durell slowly, as if the words revived some intensely pleasurable recollections.

"Your old friends were very sorry when you went away, and they will be heartily glad to hear you are coming back. You will come and see us, Mr. Durell."

"Come, my dear ! ay ; that I will,—in body or in spirit. I will be at your apple-cropping. I will pelt you with apples ; and if you cannot see where they come from, remember who promised you this. I will echo you when you go to call home your cows. I will rustle in the ivy when you pass the Holy Oak ;—(that old oak is the first place I shall go to.) I will walk round and round you as you sit on the poquelaye ; and if you feel a sudden breath of air upon your face, remember who it was that said he would haunt you. God will hear my prayer, and let me see Jersey again, whether I die first or not.—Jack ! Come here, Jack ! "

His feeble voice could not make itself heard further than half across the room ; but Jack came in from the kitchen, in answer to Le Brocq's effectual call. His father desired him to bring down the flute from the book-shelves ; and his manner of obeying,—as if he was by no means sure whether he had to do with his father or with a ghost,—did not help to recover Anna from the chilly fit into which she had been thrown by Durell's promises. She did not think she could ever go out to call home the cows, or pass the

Holy Oak or the poquelaye. She had never feared Durell till this night ; but he was strangely altered ; and she thought that the impression of this night would be stronger than that of all her previous acquaintance with him.

"Stay here, boy ; don't go away," said Durell to Jack. He was most unwillingly pinned between his mother's knees to hear the flute. Durell began again which he in Jersey every day failed him directly ; a moment to be taken from "Then I may go," said Jack, gently struggling to escape.

"Yes, my dear," said his mother. "Your father is tired now ; he has done enough for this evening."

"No, no," said Durell. "I must tell him what he is to see at home. I must tell him what little boys do in Jersey. When I was your age, Jack—"

"To-morrow, love," said his wife. "You can tell him to-morrow."

"I should like to hear what boys do in Jersey," declared Jack, his confidence returning.

"And so you shall, my boy. Sit still, Le Brocq. I shall want you to help me. When I was your age, Jack—"

And then he proceeded to tell how in his childhood he went out through thickets of the blue hydrangea to the dells where he spent the whole day in birds' nesting ; and of the hatfull of flowers that he treated himself with before he began to climb the trees whose ivy was his ladder.

Not two minutes after he had soothed himself into a state of calmness by these recollections, he began to speak indistinctly, and to appear drowsy. Jack was admonished by gesture not to ask for any thing over again; not to be impatient for what was to come next. This was a hard admonition; and when his father sank back to sleep, and he was gently withdrawn from between the knees which no longer held him, the poor boy was quietly weeping at having to wait for the rest of the story. Not even his mother suspected how long he would have to wait.

The Le Brocqs stole away. Jack was put quietly out of the room. Mrs. Durell hung a shade upon the lamp, fed the fire with the least possible noise, and sat down with her work opposite her husband, trusting that he was dreaming of the meads and coves of his native island, and that he would thus sleep on till morning. Long before morning, she had discovered that he would wake no more. The Le Brocqs were called up early by Stephen to be told that they had heard the very last words of him who had died of a broken heart.

It was a great blessing that his last words were words of peace. There was no need for Anna to implore little Jack to treasure up what his father was saying when he fell asleep. When Jack was grown up into a man, it was still a matter of mourning to him that he had not heard the whole of what his father had to tell about birds' nesting in the dells of Jersey.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAND OF SIGNALS.

THE Le Brocqs were more anxious than ever to leave London when they had seen their friendly countryman laid in the ground. In order to repay himself as far as he could for the troubles he had incurred in business, Le Brocq determined to carry with him to Jersey as much as he could convey of his manufactured article. The cider-makers of the islands would be very glad of his bottles, he knew, if he could sell them cheap enough; and he believed he could sell them cheap, and yet secure a profit by obtaining the drawback on exportation allowed by law. After all the experience he had had of the duty-paying in England, it still did not occur to him that there might be difficulty in recovering the duty which the law professed to restore. Nothing can be more evident than that when a tax is imposed on the consumption of any article, and is advanced by the maker of the article, the maker should be repaid what he has advanced when the article goes to be consumed by the people of another empire, or by those in some other part of the same empire who may be particularly exempted from the payment of the duty. Le Brocq imagined that all he should have to do would be to show how much duty he had paid upon the ware he wished to export, and to receive the sum back again. He even speculated on

whether the government would allow him interest on the money he had advanced. He considered it his due; but he would not delay his departure on account of any disagreement of this kind. He would not put off till another day the conclusion of a business which he supposed might be transacted in ten minutes. He little thought that the keenest and most practised exporter would laugh as much at the idea of finishing the affair in a few minutes as at that of receiving interest for the duty advanced. It might be that because he was discovered to be a novice, he was more strictly dealt with than those who are acquainted with the regulations of the excise and customs; but he found himself much mistaken in his calculations. It is not for the benefit of the king's interests, or for the credit of his service, that practised persons are comparatively little watched, while novices are well nigh persecuted under the perplexing system of the excise and customs. It is unjust and injurious, but perfectly natural;—natural, because no human patience, industry, and vigilance can be expected to be always equal to the disgusting labour of spying and detecting. It is natural that those who have been made fully aware of the dangers they incur by fraud should be left under the influence of fear to swear truly and pay duly, though unexamined. Honour is a word out of use upon these occasions; or is employed merely as a word. Fear is the influence to which his majesty's officers trust, when they leave a practised trader to declare his own claims and responsibili-

of a king, and the security of a government
and that which should be used, not for the
ing of its support, but only for the deterring
its subjects from crime, against which all
precautions had previously been taken.

The officers succeeded in inspiring the J
man with fear, insomuch that he pre-
doubted whether he could at last get away
out leaving his bottles behind. While one
happier than he, paid down small sums with
hand, and received larger with the other,
gabbling over oaths which none but the in-
could understand, and witnessing certain
made on their own declaration, Le Brocq
much longer ceremony to go through. He
to swear that the bottles he wished to
were none of them under the weight of
ounces; that he had given due notice to
officer of excise of his intention to sh
----- *that the contents of the bottle* -----

manufacture, and that they had paid duty ; and so on. He was next told, as a friendly warning, that if the package was not properly prepared for sealing, (*i. e.* with a hollow scooped out for the purpose,) the goods would be forfeited : if any brand or mark was erased, the goods would be forfeited, and the offender would be fined 200*l.* : if the package was not on board within twelve hours from the time of branding or sealing, it would be forfeited ; and so on. Moreover, the searcher had power to open and examine the package ; and if it was found that the exporter was not correct in every tittle of what he had sworn, he would be indicted for perjury. Le Brocq had as much horror of a false oath as any man ; but he now felt how easily a timid or a hasty man might be tempted into one, for the sake of escaping as soon and as easily as possible from the inquisition of the excise. He felt the strength of the temptation to a trader to swear to the legal preparation of a box, the packing of which he had not superintended.

In the next place, he found that, so far from obtaining interest upon the duty he had advanced, he must be at some expense to recover the drawback. The debenture, or certificate of the customs' officer that he would be entitled to the drawback, is on a ten-shilling stamp ; and he who would recover the amount of one tax could do it only by paying another. To recover an excise tax, he must pay a stamp tax. The dismay of the Jerseyman, thus haunted by taxes to the last, was highly amusing to a fellow-sufferer

who stood by, and who proclaimed his own worse fate. He was receiving back the duty upon four packages of goods, and each debenture cost him 11s. 6d.; making 2*l.* 7*s.* the cost of recovering 10*l.* But this was not the last discovery that Le Brocq had to make.

It appeared finally that, as the goods were intended for the Channel islands, the drawback could not be allowed till a certificate of the landing of the goods could be produced, signed by the collector and comptroller of the customs on the island where the ware was landed. Le Brocq was not the less disconcerted by this news for its being made evident to him that such an arrangement is necessary under a system of taxation by excise and customs. It was clear, as he acknowledged, that without such a precaution, the drawback might be obtained upon goods which were not really destined for the Channel islands: but the arrangement did not the less interfere with his private convenience.

What was to be done now? He had no inclination to leave the goods, or to forego the drawback; and there was no one here to whom he could commit his affairs. After a long consultation at home, it was agreed that Le Brocq should, after all, stay till cousin Anthony, or instructions from him, should arrive; and that Mrs. Le Brocq and Anna should proceed to the islands, conducting and conducted by Stephen. Stephen was not exactly the kind of escort that the family would have thought of accepting, some time before: but circumstances were now

nged. He could guide them to Aaron : he
ld secure for them, by ways and means of his
, a remarkably cheap passage. He was now
st, there being no longer a home for him at
. Durell's; and he promised, for his own sake
well as that of his companions, to make the
t, instead of the least, of such sight as he had

As he could not expect to meet with ano-
Durell to house and cherish him, it was his
rest to find his way back to his old comrades,
see what they could do for him. While
ring his parting thanks and blessing to Mrs.
ell, he intimated to her that, though he could
see to write, she should hear from him in a
which he hoped would be acceptable ;—an
nation which she received with about the
e degree of belief that she had been accus-
ed to give to the protestations of others of
husband's protégés.

Iild were the airs, and cloudless was the sky
n the vessel which conveyed the Le Brocqs
their escort drew near the Swinge of Alder-
and when the Channel islands rose to view,
after another, from the sunny sea. The
endous wall of rock which seems to forbid
stranger to dream of exploring Alderney,
on the left ; the little russet island of Berhou
he right ; and, beyond it, the white towers of
three Casket lighthouses, each on its rock,
all gleaming in the sunset, rose upon Anna's
t as well as upon her eye. To her surprise,
met with sympathy.

"Tis not often," said Stephen, "that I care

about storm or calm. Wind and weather take their own course for me. But I had choice for this evening. I wished for a day that would bring us here before sunset, and a sky that would let the sun shine."

" You see those white towers," said A., who perceived that he twinkled and strained his eyes in that direction.

" See them! yes, indeed," said Mrs. Le Breton. " Those must be stone blind that do not get dazzled with all that glare. I like Jersey, with the green ivy hanging from the rock above the sea. I want to be at Jersey, with my Louis."

" All in good time, ma'am," said Stephen. " We must land somewhere else first, and you Aaron. How like ghosts they stand!" continued, still looking towards the Castle. " And one taller than the rest."

" You see that too," said Anna. " Then you are sure you must see Berhou. We are coming nearer every moment. Hark to the splash in the Swinge!"

" Ay, ay; I'll listen with the best," said Stephen. " And I can see something in the Swinge, though the dark island is all one with the sea to me."

" Which dark island? And what do you call the Swinge?"

" Berhou has nothing to mark it to my eye, but I can just trace out Alderney against the sky. There is the something white that is leaping and gleaming there, I take to be the foam of the waters in the Swinge. Ah! here we go!"

While the vessel pitched and rolled, and took her zigzag course, as if spontaneously, between the black points of rock which showed themselves above the white billows, and seemed to tell a hundred dangers as formidable as themselves, Anna was sorry for him who, either physically or intellectually blind, could see nothing in Berhou. either man nor child was visible; no human habitation; no boat upon the strip of beach which the rocks and the sea spared between them; but the grey gull sat, spreading its wings for flight, and the stormy petrel, rarely met within sight of land, were here perceived to lose the mystery of their existence. While Anna observed them going forth and returning, and hovering over the fissures of the rock in which they make their homes, she found that Mother Carey's chickens were probably hatched from the egg, like other birds, and not wafted from the moon, or floated from the sea depths,—the especial favourites of some unseen power. The slopes of down which lay lowed themselves in the partings of the rocks, looked green in contrast with whatever surrounded them; though no hand of man brightened their verdure, and they were not even trodden by my foot but those of the wild animals who had the region to themselves. While she was thusazing, and her mother would look at nothing because it was not Jersey, the master and one or two of his crew seemed to be watching the coast of the other island in the intervals of their extreme care to obviate the perils of the passage through the strait. At this moment, a breath of

air brought the faint sound of chiming Alderney. Stephen instantly turned and waited patiently till it came again, was sure that it was wafted from steeple, and not from any region of fa-

"Master," said Stephen, "you w
able to land us in Alderney to-nig
afraid."

The master was just going to advise to proceed to Guernsey. The state of was such that he could not engage i one on shore in Alderney. The party go on to Guernsey.

"The vraicking season begins to master. You have no mind to lose all sengers that might like to stay and vraicking. Well; that is fair enough, cannot go on to Guernsey, having no You may set us ashore on Berhou."

The master supposed he meant some o The honey-bees and the rabbits might n good night's rest in Berhou, but ther lodgings for Christians. Stephen knew b knew, moreover, that the master might enough pleased at being spared perfo promise as to Alderney, to land the part objection, in a more practicable place was true. The master had not the le tition to their supping with the rabbits, : ing among the sea-fowl, if they chose over, if they found themselves starvin time he came back that way, he would some biscuit, if they would only hoist

stress. Stephen did not care a whit for the aster's mockery of his plans, or for Mrs. Le rocq's complaints at being landed any where so r from her Louise. He showed so much re-
ect to Anna's doubtful looks and words as
assure her that he knew what he was about,
d that no delay would arise from his choice of
uninhabited island for a temporary resting
ace. Anna had no choice but to trust him ;
t a feeling of forlornness came over her when,
ving landed the old lady, and seated her on the
nds to recover her breath and dry her tears, she
d Stephen stood to see the vessel recede in the
ait, and at length enter the open sea beyond,
ving them out of reach of human voice and
lp.

" Could that bell be heard here from Alderney
the sea was quiet?" she asked.

" I dare say it might; but this sea is never
et," he replied. " Day and night, summer
I winter, it plunges and boils as you see. You
thinking that the sound of a church-bell
uld be cheering in this solitude; but yonder
I keeps its music for the folks on its own
nd; and a merry set they will be to-night on
south side, watching the tide going down
ards morning, that they may begin the vraick-
;"

" And what are we to do next?" asked Anna,
h a touch of the doleful in her voice which
med to amuse Stephen.

" Catch Mother Carey's chickens, and run
er rabbits, to be sure. You know there is no-

else to live upon here. We shall have a life of it, shall not we?" I wish you would answer me, Stephen. You cannot bear joking. What are you

You must watch for the lightning, and eat a biscuit in the meantime as a comfort that some biscuits

Le Brocq was never more anxious than when she might return after. The sun was fast sinking behind the dark mists, so they could not be long now dark totally. There would be crowns of light gleam, and more of Stephen's life would be unravelled. Anna suggested that he had to go anywhere to look for a lodgings, it would be better to move before the darkness came on. She concluded they were not safe here on a stone all night, looking at A Stephen begged pardon. He knew every street and way so well that he had forgotten how much important daylight was to his companions. He rose from the vetch-strewn sand and laid himself at ease, loaded himself with what he could conveniently carry of the luggage, saying that the rest might remain where it was, as there was no chance of rain in the morning, and set forward over the waste.

This was the first ground the party had seen since they left London; and even Mrs. Lambert observed the difference between Lambeth and the turf on which they were now

g, matted with fragrant heath, with patches between of blossoming thyme. Little white-tailed rabbits trotted in all directions to their burrows; and swarms of the celebrated honey-bees (called the leaf-cutter, from its hanging its cell the sands with rose-leaf curtains) hovered and hummed over the thyme-beds and the briar-rose bush which was now closing its blossoms from a honey-searcher. The dash and roar of the wind were left behind, and the deepest silence succeeded. None of the party spoke while they proceeded with noiseless steps, Stephen leading the way, with his staff for his protection. He would go first and alone, lest he should lose his way by relaxing his attention. At last, his step quickened, and he felt the ground about him.

"Is there a bit of grey rock hereabouts, like a sofa?"

"There is a stone seat that you might fancy a sofa, twelve yards from your right hand."

"Give me your arm round to the other side of There! now there is a path downwards, west from your feet, is not there?"

"Yes; a very steep path,—difficult to get down, I should think. The honeysuckles are a hedge on either side. You smell the honeysuckles?"

"It was the honeysuckles that guided me, before we had half crossed the heath. You were too busy with the thyme to attend to them, I may say; but the honeysuckles were what I was the look-out for. If we have to go to Serk,

you will find the air as sweet as I them."

" Why should we go to Serk ?"

" I may be able to tell you with two, or we may have to wait till the last case, I know of a snug cave which will light a fire with a little of yonder wood; it will be odd if we do not fall in with good to eat and drink, and something to sleep upon."

" I sleep in a cave !" exclaimed Brocq. " I cannot do any such thing as sleep in a cave in my life."

" If you see any place that you am sure I am very glad," replied " Yonder sofa would not be a bad place for a summer's night. Only, a brood of N---- chickens might chance to flap their wings over you and startle you; or, if you were to happen to find yourself in the middle of strangers, all smoking their pipes, you might wish yourself down with a hole in your pocket. If you look round, ma'am, there are no blue roofs in all the island,—unless I altered it since I knew it."

Anna guided him, her mother calling out all the way, that they must not go far: she did not choose to be left alone.

While they were for a few minutes out of sight, she had recourse to her prayers, finding herself in too strong a panic for tears. Those nasty birds would come and pick out first her eyes and then Anna's; and then they two would be more blind than Stephen, and could never get away; and their bones would lie stark and stiff in the cold ground. Before she had done praying that she might live to die in her bed, her companions reappeared, to save her eyes for the present from the birds.

When Stephen and Anna had reached the first turn of the winding path, he desired to know what was to be seen beneath. "Scarcely anything," replied Anna. "Between the Casket lights and these rocks, there is nothing but the dark grey sea."

"And nothing under these rocks?"

"Only a little patch of sand, with nothing upon it; and the white birds sailing out and in. Not a boat on the sea, nor a living person on the land! What a place to bring us to, Stephen!"

"Not a living person on the land! Do you suppose there are any dead, Miss Anna? Do you see any white skeletons among the dark rocks?"

"The place gives one as horrible an idea as you can speak," Anna replied. "This is a place where a poor wretch may be cast ashore, and drag himself up out of sea-reach, and mark

spirit. O, Stephen, what a place to bring
mother and me to!"

"Ay, is not it? You are making up your mind to die here, I see. Come; this is all I can show you yet. We may go up to the sofa and see whether your mother is dreaming of dead men's bones, or crying because she has got away."

Anna was not disposed to make any reply. She led the way back in silence, and more to her mother than to remind her that her monstrance was in vain. Nothing could be more cheerless than the companionship of the party for the next half hour, while the stars were still piercing the heaven, and the sea-birds dived into the caverns below, and the night breeze blew forth on its course, and whispered through the trees which stood as sentries over the restless sea. Mrs. Le Brocq sat bolt upright on the sofa. Stephen lay down on the turf as if he

each Stephen ; for he yawned, and laid himself down as before. Anna could only suppose that she had heard nothing. There was no use in asking her mother ; for she must doubtless be fully occupied with the noise in her head, of which she complained at all times, and especially when under any sort of agitation.

In ten minutes more, Stephen jumped up, saying briskly,

"Now, Miss Anna, I must trouble you once more."

"To do what, Mr. Stephen ?"

"To prevent my being lost in the honeysuckles, that is all."

With some unwillingness, Anna again made herself his guide down the path. When she reached the turn, she stifled an exclamation of astonishment.

"Out with it, Miss Anna !" said Stephen. You see none but friends. What are they doing below ?"

"They have set up a boat sideways, to prevent the fire being blown out ; or, perhaps, to hinder its being seen from the sea. What a fire they are making ! and every man has his pipe."

"As is fitting for those that help so many to pipe which they could not otherwise get. How many are there ? Do you see any face that you know ?"

"I can scarcely tell yet. The light flickers ! One—two—there are five, I think. O, Stephen !—it never can be,—yes, it is,—Mr. Fine, the shopkeeper at St. Peter's, that—"

"Why should not it be Mr. Prince shopkeepers are as likely a set of men to be on a visiting eve as any. Is he the one you know?"

"Yes. I see all their faces now. There is no other that I have ever known, I think. How very odd it is to see Mr. Prince look just as used to do when he stood smiling behind his counter!"

"He smiles, does he? Well; I hope ladies will not be afraid to trust yourself to Mr. Prince; I have no doubt he will be pleased to take care of you back."

"To St. Peter's! But we do not want to go to St. Peter's. Stephen, I believe we shall make you understand how much we wish to get back to Jersey. I wonder you can trifling so."

"Have patience," said Stephen. "You know that there is one thing that you desire more than to get back to Jersey."

"About Aaron. There he is! behind the boat!" cried she, passing Stephen, and down the steep pathway, as if she had thought it possible for Aaron now to escape her by running into the sea. Aaron had no wish to flee. Before his sister had made her way through the companions, he had opened his arms to her. He had no less pleasure in the meeting than in herself.

He was all surprise at finding Anna recently alone on a desert island; and still he was not expecting her. He knew

family meant soon to return to their farm ; but he would as soon have expected to meet the queen of England in the wilds of Berhou as his sister Anna.

His mother there too !—And his father also ? he inquired with an altered voice. His father not being of the party, he became extremely impatient to join his mother.

" That is the way by which I came down," Anna explained. " There,—by yonder little opening. Let me show you. And poor Stephen : forgot him ;—he is there ; and he can neither get up nor down by himself, and I left him alone. Aaron, how could you go away as you did ?" And all the way up the ascent, Aaron had to justify himself for going away as he did. He scarcely paused a moment to greet Stephen ; but on to find Mrs. Le Brocq. When the first tears and exclamations were over, the question was heard again,

" Aaron, how could you go away as you did ?"

" Why, mother, is not being here much better than drudging on the tread-wheel, or even than doing nothing in a prison ? I tell you, mother, you did but know the pleasant sort of life I ave been leading lately—Well ; if that won't do, let me tell you that it makes me so merry to see you and Anna standing here,—so free, and so far out of the reach of such fellows as Studley, —that I could find in my heart to whiff away all laws like the smoke from one of those tobacco-pipes."

Anna thought that the use of laws was to en-

able people to stand free, and out of the knaves and revengeful men.

"To be sure, such ought to be the laws ; but is such the purpose and effect of the excise laws ? Nobody knows better than the other men below there, that the raising of money for the state is necessary for the security and quiet of the people ; but if the money is raised so as to spoil their security and quiet, who would not be tempted to wish the laws at the devil, and let the state take its chance for money ? I suppose it is a good thing for us to be here, at any rate, under an open sky, and with plenty of meat and drink below. Come, mother ; we will have supper to-night, without asking the king about what we shall have, or paying for it. We may as well enjoy one thing rather than another. We have plenty of vraicking cakes from the baker, and some fine French wine to drink with."

"O, Mr. Stephen," cried Mrs. Le Breton, "you are much obliged to you for bringing us here. Aaron is so free and happy ! and we have plenty of cakes, and French wine ! We are much obliged to you, Mr. Stephen."

"Yes, we are indeed," said Anna, "I beg your pardon, I am sure, for what you were doing for us. But it was very forlorn. How well and merry Aaron used to be ! If we were but certain of the right !"

"How can it be wrong when we are as merry as children let out of school ?" asked. "I found out your evil thoughts,

Miss Anna ; but now, perhaps, you will trust me another time. I may chance to hear more in a church-bell than the news that the vraicking begins to-morrow."

"Was it that bell that told you that Aaron would be here to-night? I never thought of that. I never could have guessed it."

"I dare say not. Some people that have more interest in such matters than you, are no more aware than you of the sly little markets that are held in many a cove and cavern, when in oyster-fishing or a vraicking gives opportunity for many boats to meet together. Such a bell as that we heard in Alderney is a signal to more ears than it is intended for ; and lights like those (pointing towards the Caskets) "serve many eyes for a dial, to show the hour of meeting. Aaron, are there many foreigners off the islands just now?"

"Above fifty small sail of French off Guernsey this morning. The Guernsey folks are fine customers to the French now ; which is no little help to our business. We can get anything to order ; and when by chance other things fail, there is always corn and wine for the boldest of us to carry ; and I, for one, have never had to wait for a port to get them into.—But come ; there will be no supper left if we do not make haste down. We jumped ashore with fine appetites, and I would not trust any body with a cooked supper, after such a pull as we have had to-day. Besides, we have not overmuch time, or we must be off Little Serk before the first

farmer is up and overlooking the sea. We have a private errand there."

"And you are going to leave us—all alone?" exclaimed Mrs. Le Brocq.

"Not if you wish to go with us, mother," said Little Serk; "you will be all the nearer Jersey before we know. We will take good care of you. Anna; you are not afraid of supping with our partners, are you?"

"O, no; and yet, if anybody had told us where they were going, we should not look at all wild and terrible. I thought people did when they broke the laws."

"It depends much on what sort of laws they break," observed Stephen; "and again depends on what sort of laws they are broken. When it is not the violent and lawless, but such people as thrifty shop-keepers—"

"I cannot help laughing," said Anna, "when I think of Mr. Prince. I am sure nobody ever dreamt of being afraid of him. Mother, will you come down, and speak to Mr. Prince, and have some supper?"

"And he will tell us the best plan for getting back to Jersey, I dare say. I wonder whether he has been in the way of hearing anything of us lately?"

The old lady made little difficulty about her descent; and she and her daughter were evidently so far demoralized as to be supping with a company of smugglers, almost as comfortable as if they had been honest men.

CHAPTER VII.

WELCOME TO SUPPER.

HE party was off Little Serk, as Aaron willed, before the first farmer was abroad on the upland, to overlook the gleamy sea. Two of the company had hastened over the heath, while the others were at supper, to bring the larger packages which had been left behind; and all had it off beneath the moon some time before midnight. Mr. Prince had found a little leisure for being civil to his former customers, though he had much to do, as well as his companions, in owing in one of the caverns the goods he had brought from France, and loading the boat with packages deposited there by some friendly mickers and lobster-fishers.

It was not that in these islands any danger attended traffic of any kind; except in the one article of spirits which had not paid duty. There were here no guards patrolling the sands, or perched upon the steep, to look for thieves in every bark that cleaved the blue expanse, and anticipate murder when the twilight spread its shadows. There were here no questionable codes,—spy-stations,—niched in places convenient for overlooking the traffic of housewives with the fishermen who furnished their tables. Here there were no deadly struggles in the darkness, the comrade going down in deep waters, with the bitter consciousness that he was thrown

overboard lest his wounds should lead panions into danger ; or left unclaimed beach, while wife or parents are secretly ing, and longing to give the exposed respectful burial which strangers will n No such extraordinary arrangements de simplicity and mar the peace of the these islands ; but, while the coasts of Fra England cannot enjoy the same freed islanders are tempted to share in the fra the perils of their neighbours. Not cont having corn, wine, and tobacco at their cost of production and carriage, they are to help others to the same privilege ; continue to be so willing as long as, office of go-between, they can make a the bad legislation of the two kingdom whose embrace they lie. There is no for this but rectifying the faults of Fre English commercial legislation. As taxes are levied by raising the prices of ne articles so high as to make smuggling pr the island boats will steal along the sh cautiously cross the straits on the di errands of a mediator between two defr they will land their passengers short o point, because they have something besid sengers on board ; they will make a show sters to hide tea and tobacco. To impose re on them, similar to those by which the profit in pocket and suffer in morals, wou increase the evil by enlarging the field of i tion, and adding the demand of the isla

t of the two neighbouring coasts. There is no
nedy but in putting all on an equality, not of
straint, but of freedom.

The lord of Serk and his people had not yet
ned their eyes on the morning sunshine, when
boat containing Aaron and his party ran
ler the perpendicular rocks of the island, and
eral voices announced that they had arrived at
ir destination. No landing-place was visible ;
the women had by this time become inured
vonders, and resigned to whatever of romantic
ight come in their way. They asked no ques-
s, even when their boat grated against the
k, and moved uneasily in the ripple without
ng intended to make any progress. They
le no objection when desired to lay hold of a
e which dangled from a ledge thirty feet above
r heads ; and quietly submitted to be hauled
they knew not whither. Up and down, for-
d and round-about they went, now seeing a
taken up from a store-cavern, now dropping
message in a lonely cottage ; and at last sit-
down to repose in a cavern which was lighted
from a natural opening at the top, upon
ch the blue sky seemed to rest as a roof.
re the echoes were already awake with the
ys of the mattock and the grating of the saw.
e boat-building went on, early and late ; for
ertain Englishman had found out how well
islanders are off for timber,—the best of tim-
which pays no duty ; and many a good
gain he made by going forth in a worn-out
el, and coming home in a boat of Serk work-

still a little trip to make.

"My dear, you will be tired to de-
his mother. "I never knew you work
in Jersey."

Aaron laughed, and said that people a-
tired to death when they work at no bid
their own : and, as for working at nigh-

"It is a bad practice, Aaron, depend
said his sister. "Honest work is done
light."

"Carry your objections to those wh-
me to work at night," answered Aaron.
not me only, but hundreds more. They
few who would naturally work when the
the world is supposed to be asleep ;—t
beside the sick-bed, and the watchmen i
the streets of cities ; the beacon-keeper t
the lamps in his high tower, and the h
that fixes his eyes upon those lights f

night, and the violent man by day. Without us, none of us could lie down and sleep in peace."

"Without some wholesome laws : but, if it were not for certain unwise and cruel laws, thousands more of us would lie down and sleep in peace. Ask the country justice in England, whose business it is to enforce the laws, how often it happens that labourers who cannot get work during the day because their superiors have a monopoly of bread, toil unlawfully all the night because their superiors have a monopoly of time. He may dispute the wickedness ; but he will not deny what comes of digging pitfalls for men, lest they should set snares for birds. Ask, (nobody could have told better than poor urell)—ask any exciseman what time is chosen by certain traders for their traffic, and makers for their work ; and he will tell you of the burning, and the boiling, and the distilling, and the packing and removing that take place by night. He will tell you that the noblest works that men can do, and that they ought to do proudly in the daylight, are done by night, because the law has made a sin and a shame upon them. To make improvements in human comfort is turned into a sin and shame, when those improvements are made too expensive by a tax ; therefore they are made by night. The exchange of the fruits of man's labour is made a sin and a shame, when a tax comes in to make such an exchange unprofitable : therefore it is done by night. These innocent things being made a sin and a shame is the

reason why tax-gatherers prowl about many robbers, when the sun is down ; the better men whom they entrap are prison in the morning, to come out bl desperate, as if they had committed against God's majesty instead of a king's treasury."

Mrs. Le Brocq stared in astonishment. With a little hesitation, she asked whether he had not adopted a new vocation turned preacher. The kindness of his words to her, and the eloquence of his speech, to impress her with the idea. He simply answered, that there would be no lack of power or of eloquence upon this subject, if those who had suffered were allowed to bear witness. A voice would rise up from all the land, forth over the sea, if every Briton were jured by the mode in which he is compelled to pay his contribution to the state, in his mind.

But still,—Aaron talked so differently from what he used to do,—so freely,—so clearly,

"There is all the difference in the world, between—— But I do not wish to say anything disrespectful of my father : only mention that the reason why it is always prudent for governments to allow their subjects to speak out, is because nothing makes a man more eloquent than a sense of wrong ; and that the eloquence that is suppressed, the more surely will the sense of wrong show itself in another way. A whole nation can mutter

m, as I used to be ; and its muttering and mness may prove of more importance than e. Now I have got an occupation of my own, am under nobody's management, I could ch (as you would say) very strongly both to nts and governments about not being spies meddlers,—that is to say," (recollecting his er) "about not interfering more than is ant with the doings of their children and ects. To make wise and merciful general , and then leave the will and actions free in cular instances, is the only true policy,—the kind of government which is not in its nature nny."

But how do you apply that to the paying of s?" inquired Stephen. " How is the state to money on such a plan of government ?"

Far more easily than in any other way, in opinion. Under a general rule that property pay such or such a proportion of tax, there least possible room for partiality and sion ; for the derangement of people's rs, and interference with people's actions. e is an open and honest calling to account, nes that are fixed, in a manner that is estab ed, and for purposes that are well understood: e, by meddling as excisemen and custom e officers meddle, the king is defrauded of ffections of his people ; the state is wronged urse and reputation ; and its agents are made ers to teach multitudes a livelihood which never have been heard of. Which of us d naturally have dreamed of living by de-

"I will see you home, and do my errand at the custom-house," replied "The States shall never have cause to c of me, as long as they go on to take our they do now. As for cheating them, I c if I would: and I am sure I have no des it while they treat me like a man, and more from me than is due from a subject

"I am sure I hope they will go on to

"You may well wish it. If ever th meddling with your cider or soap-mal setting spies upon me when I buy tol hemp, I shall be off to some country,—may be,—where taxes are demanded filched."

"Turkey! I thought that was a country to live in."

"So you would find it in many respe it is wise and free in its mode of taxati the effects of this one kind of wisdom

nothing more was necessary to happiness than to be sailing southwards, with Aaron trimming the sail, Anna looking as tranquil as if she had never been in an excise court or a prison, the beloved island rising on the sight, in which was Louise, probably with a pretty baby in her arms;—a pretty baby, of course, as everything belonging to Louise must be pretty. How wondrous looked that picturesque coast from Rosnez to Rozel, as promontory after promontory came into view, tapestried with verdure, or studded with cairns or church towers, and casting h its dark shadow to hide its eastern cove from declining sun! How busy were those coves to-day! how unlike their usual solitude and stillness! At almost every other time, it was a pleasure to see more than a solitary loiterer on narrow path whose precarious line circled the rocks, and penetrated the bays, now winding up the steep, now dipping to the margin of the water; and, as for the yellow sands, they were unprintless from tide to tide, while the islanders were busy about their farmsteads. But now, all was as animated as if the land was joyful at the Brocqs' return. Carts were standing in the water to receive the vraic; and the red-capped men who rode the horse, or the white-sleeved men who wielded his rake in the vehicle, looked bright in the evening sunshine. Here and there, a horse might be seen swimming home from a distant mass of rock, guided by a youth or a maiden mounted on the heaped panniers. Boats were plying from point to point; and on every

exposed place all along this coast wh lobsters could safely come up this day themselves ; and when the infant crabs next propose to play hide-and-seek in w to them a sort of marine jungle, they wo their moist retreat stripped and bare, ar betake themselves again to the tide. H the beach might be seen parties busy at work, or busier at their recreation,—sp and tossing the ooze as if it were b broaching the cider cask, and distributi vraicking cakes. Mrs. Le Brocq once upset the boat, by lifting up her ponderous with the view of hailing the mowers on sh a feat about as practicable in her case as s hands with one on the top of Coutances dral. She was glad to reseat herself, and worse, and try to wait patiently till th should have rounded Archirondel tow given her up to tread one of the greer from St. Catherine's bay to the ridge, other side of which was Louise.

e stones as if it had never grown tired all
ese many months.

"Who could have thought we had been
way?" was Anna's first exclamation. Her
other was toiling on too fast to reply; but
aron gave an unconscious answer to her thought
en he presently overtook them, and delivered
e result of the observation he had lingered on
e ridge to make with his boat glass.

"Who do you think is in the porch, mother?"
"Louise!"

"And who else?—No, not her husband, nor
ctorine; but her baby. There is a bundle on
r arm; I am sure it must be her baby. Charles
out vraicking, no doubt; and Victorine is milk-
g, I see, behind there. Not so fast, mother,
I may advise. Let me go first. She will be
s surprised to see me; and I think she cannot
strong yet, or she would have been out
ticking too."

It was, in fact, Louise's first evening out of
ors after her confinement. What an evening
was!—Anna relieving her of all household
es; her mother overflowing by turns with
ecting narrative and admiration of the infant;
ephen giving a droll turn to every thing; and
paternal restraint to spoil the whole! It was
pity that night was near, and that it would
me to put a stop to the interesting questions
d answers that abounded.

"When do you gather your apples, love? I
ve been thinking we must soon be setting
out your cider."

"But, mother, only think of your away from London without seeing the king."

"My dear, your father did write to him; is not as if we had had nothing to do with."

"And what was the answer like?"

"Bless me, Anna! we never thought n the king's answer. But, really, my head full of things, I never recollect to s inquire at the post-office. However, you will be more mindful, I dare say. Well, I I cannot think how you managed with tl to have such a misfortune happen, my de never failed with one all the time I lived i

"And you say you never so much as t Lambeth. I do wonder you did not man one way or another."

"Nobody keeps cows there, love, b brewers; and then the poor beasts live grains, and seldom taste fresh grass. flourish, in a way, too. A great brewer had one brought in, intending that it shoul the range of the paved yard, on Sundays the gates were shut: but the creatur fattened on the grains so that when the would have let her out, she could not turn stall. When they had thinned her a lit that she might get exercise, it was thoug the fumes of the liquor had affected her she capered about so among the casks. I never heard but what she yielded very cream, which you do not always see in Lo

"I wonder how they get cream at all. you say, there are no cows but one in

ewery. Perhaps the excise makes the difficulty th taking some of the cream for the king ; as ey say the tithe man does for the parson." Aaron had not heard of an exciseman being t instructed to thrust himself between the cow d the milk-pail ; but he should not be surised any day to hear of its being made part of excise officer's duty to peep in at a dairy latte, and see what the milk-maids were about with eir skimming dishes. Did not he hear horses' st outside ? Could it be Charles ? No ; Charles s not coming home to-night. What old end could it be ? And he ran out to see.

" An old enemy," the guest expected to be lled. It was Janvrin, the tax-gatherer. Every dy was struck with the strangeness of the cumstance that he should appear on this parular night,—to a party who had had so much do with taxes since they had met him last. ere was something much more astonishing to n in the cordiality of his reception.

" The last time I saw you all here," said he, " you certainly wished me at the Caskets, or newhere further off still ; and now, you are aping your good supper upon me, as if I were me to pay money, and not to ask it."

" For our former behaviour," replied Aaron, " you may call him to account,"—pointing to ephen. " You heard him say what taxation s in England,—just paying a trifle more for icles when they were bought ;—such a mere le as not to be perceived. He is not laughing his sleeve now as he was when he told that

traveller's tale. It is to our having taken his word, Janvrin, and made trial of taxation, that you owe your different to-night."

Stephen expressed his sorrow that he had taken so much more effect than intended. He really would try,—he would do his very best, to avoid telling travellers' tales of the future.

"The oddest thing is," said Janvrin, "there are some who are no travellers that tell the same tale. There are dwellers in England, even speakers in her parliament, who do not know the condition and interests of the people they tax; who go on to insist that the filching system of taxation of commodities,—is the best way of raising a revenue. The wonder to me is, that the mouths of such men are not stopped before such taxes come to be borne."

"Because it is the ignorant who have the worst of the burden," Stephen said. "The payment is made unconsciously by those who pay in the long run. The trader is not aware of his grievance at first, and makes an outcry when the time comes for him to repay what he has received. When he repays it out of his customers' pockets, he drops it like a hot potato, and nobody takes it up. It saves some trouble to him, and saves the country much trouble that all should be hush-hush. The time cannot be far off when honest men will be set to inquire, and then——"

"And what then?"

"They will report that the truest kind of honesty is to let the people will be rather to preserve their rights than to give up their money."

ect tax, be it what it may, that was ever vised, than to go on taxing glass and soap, & many other things nearly as necessary.” “If the people are so little aware as you say, I’m afraid that day is a long way off.”

“I think it is near at hand; and for this son; that there has been a beginning made with the excise taxes. The government has set e candles, beer, cider and perry, hides and nted goods. What should hinder their going to glass and soap, now that the mischief gins to be understood?”

“Especially,” said Janvrin, “when they find at it is to have fewer officers to pay, and aller regiments of spies to provide for, and s trouble in delivering money backwards and wards, as they have to do now with drawbacks l import duties, and all such troublesome ings. It is a pity they should not come here, l see what it is to have houses made of free cks, and filled with furniture made of un- ed wood, and cleaned with home-made soap, l—but I need not tell the present company at it is to live in Jersey, before or after living England. The English may have heard a e of our meadows, our cattle, and our fruits, like to which they cannot make in a season, their will; but they can hardly have heard ch of our taxation, or else they would come live here by thousands;—or rather, mend ir own plans so as not to be beaten by us in ter-selling in their own markets,—not to be iged to us for helping them underhand with

such corn and oil and wine as we do not to reflect with shame that we have given five newspapers to their one tax-gatherer to their ten."

"The comptroller at St. Heliers advise me not to go to England," said he. "He knew well what he meant in saying so to-morrow; and because I was inclined to take it ill at

"Saying, I suppose, 'What's that Hey, Mr. Aaron?'

"Just so. I have had my answer you. I hope he knows as well how office is from that of an English customs officer. When he has done his sessional wine and spirits, he may put his hand in his pocket and amuse himself. I well remember doing so, of old. In England, they pack a package that comes on shore that is expected; and scarcely a thing that is brought to be sold for touch or taste, that is not to be taxed."

"That is going too far for any protection. If the English would have no protection, but only for revenue, they would easily find out what would bear customs without doing harm to any or all. To tax outwards only what their countrymen so much better than other countries would go on to buy, notwithstanding and inwards nothing at all. When China her own tea, and Russia her own tallies and hides, and England her own iron

id each country, in like manner, its own best
oduce, and nobody's else, the curse of the cus-
ms will cease from off the earth."

" Meantime, if the duties were proportioned to
e natural prices of articles, and made to fall
th the price, instead of rising——"

" Some of our islanders must change their oc-
cupation; or fish lobsters in earnest instead of
etence. Then there would be an end of the
owning curse of smuggling."

Aaron and Stephen made no answer,—the
e applying himself once more to his plate, and
other pressing the tax-gatherer again to eat.
interval was left for Louise to repeat to him,
ile Victorine stood open-mouthed to hear, some
the wonders of life in Lambeth;—the non-
stence of cows, the dearth of baked pears and
ic, and the actual presence of a river in
ich nobody thought of washing clothes. This
hinded Victorine to make haste and put away
ry stray article of apparel before Stephen re-
d to rest.

CHAPTER VIII.

A WANDERER STILL.

Iy mother is still asleep, I suppose," said
on, the next morning, when followed by Anna
e was going forth. " I do not wonder; for
is drowsy enough to have slept on till noon, if
d not had this errand of my father's to do at

"O, yes; I shall look in upon you then at odd times. I may chance to en you are all asleep, or to drop in for a soup on a winter day. You do not want know. The rope-walk is Malet's; and r will take care of the farm."

"No, no, Aaron. Nothing will pros us if you go out again with those law-bre the sea. We shall never be happy if ye breaking the laws. God will never pro

"How can you say that, Anna, whe prospered already as I never thought to The worst that can happen to me is to tobacco seized now and then. I assure is all; for I am only a trader. It is n my business to meet the coast-guard, murdered. They can only seize my go that signifies little with tobacco, which next to nothing, and brings me a fine p
F. - - - - - L. - - - - - T. - - - - - S. - - - - - E. - - - - - L. - - - - -

"The sea and the freedom I have upon it.
You ought to be glad that I have found a way of
life that I like, and left one that I hated."

Anna only shook her head and wept the more ;
and then Stephen came groping out ; and,
led by Aaron's voice, approached also to say
farewell.

"O, do not go yet," cried she to Aaron. "When
will you come back ? When will your conscience
touch about your way of life, about living
cheating the state ?"

" Whenever the state shows a little more re-
gard to the consciences of the king's subjects
in it does now. What I do, I have been taught ;
and you know how, Anna. I shall come back to
the land whenever they cut off my living
sea. Whenever the English un-tax corn and
tobacco, I shall come and be a Jersey
farmer, and you shall milk my cows, unless——"

Stephen seized the occasion for a joke about
the brown maidens of France, into whose com-
pany Aaron's wild occupations sometimes brought
him, and about the damsels of the neighbouring
sets, who had learned to know the stroke of his
r from all others, as soon as its flash could be
seen in the sunshine. Aaron laughed ; and
laughing, bade his sister again farewell.

She could not even smile. Little did she once
think that it could ever make her sad to see Aaron
leave ; but as little did she then suppose that
iron would ever live by a lawless occupation.
dly did she watch him, leading away his com-
panion till both were quite out of sight ; and dis-

consolately did she then sit down in the p
and grieve over the temptation which dre
brother away from the blossoming valley
his days might have proceeded, as they
begun, in innocence and plenty.

ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
TAXATION.

No. V.
THE
HOLARS OF ARNESIDE.

A Tale.
BY
HARRIET MARTINEAU.

LONDON :
CHARLES FOX, 67, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1834.

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THE
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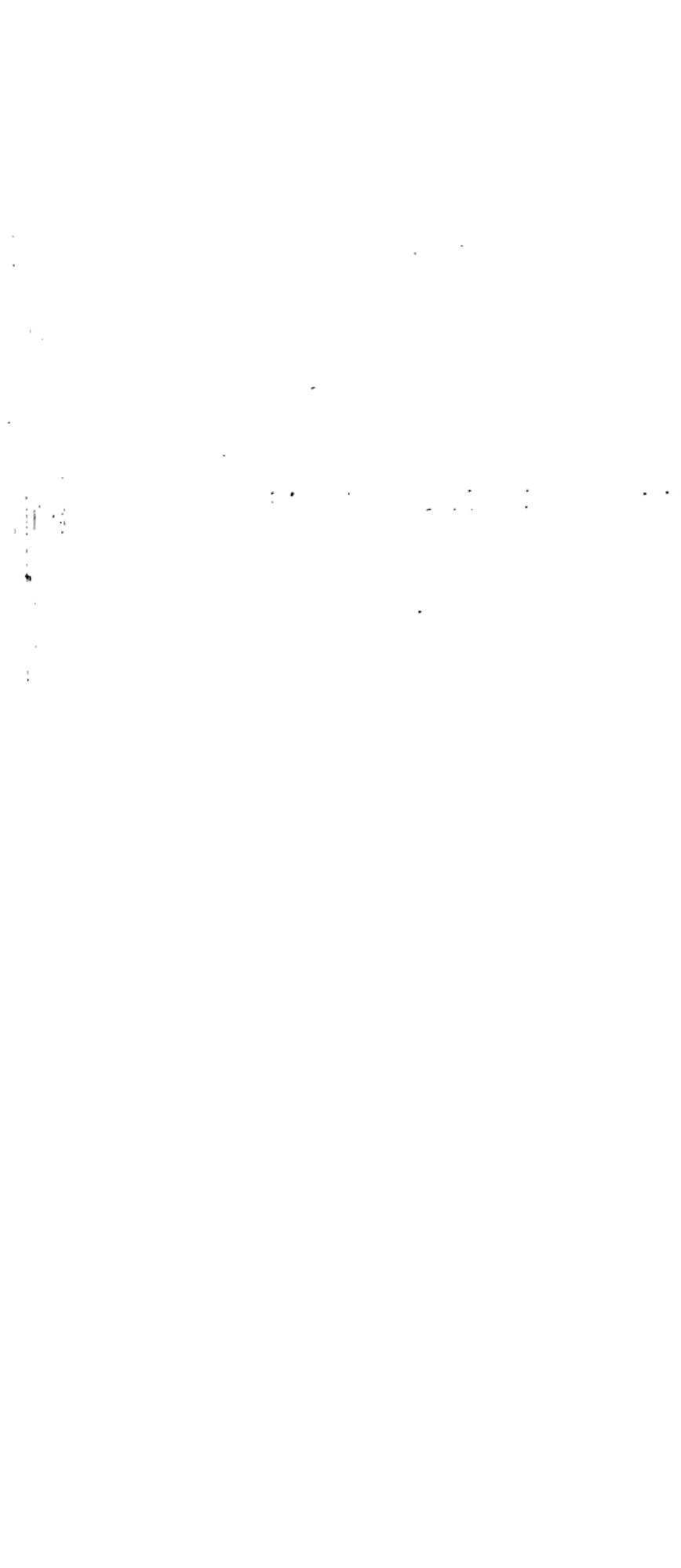
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—
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P R E F A C E.

treating of some of our methods of Taxation, as been my object to show that they are unjust,ous and unprofitable, to a degree which could er be experienced under a system of simple, ct taxation. Believing that such a system st be finally and generally adopted, I have en- voured to do the little in my power towards paring and stimulating the public mind to e the demand.

f I had consulted my own convenience, and value of my little books as literary produc- s, I should have written less rapidly than I e done. My conviction was and is, that the means of satisfying the interest of my readers such a subject as I had chosen, was to publish hly. I am now about to compensate for my h speaking by a long silence. It costs me e pain to say this: but the great privilege of man life,—that of looking forward, is for ever

at hand
pass ov
templat
service,
stimulus and solace ; and I already
e few years of preparation, and con-
time when, better qualified for their
ay greet my readers again.

H. M.

July 1st,

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THE
CHOLARS OF ARNESIDE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERIES OF WISDOM.

OME, my maiden : come and tell me. You w what it is I like to hear of a Sunday even-," said Nurse Ede to her little girl. Nurse sitting with her hands before her, beside the round table from which she had cleared away supper. As it was Sunday evening, she d not work ; and nurse had never been taught read. Little Mildred was standing on the -sill, watching Owen and Ambrose who were aged outside. As she turned in at her mother's mons, she said she thought it rained ; which sheep would be glad of to-morrow.

Irs. Ede went to the door to call in her boys, Owen's best jacket should suffer by the rain. Bless the lads !" cried she. " What are they wling on the ground in that manner for ?" Watching the ants home," Mildred ex-
ned. " There are more ants than ever, mother : n a line. Ambrose found where they went to ne end ; and now he is looking for the other

nest. They are running as fast as ever they can go."

"Though 'tis Sunday," observed nurse. "Well 'tis not every body that Sunday is given to: and it is no rule, my dear, because the ants run as fast as ever they can go, that you should not walk quietly to school and to church, as the Lord bids. Come in, my dears, and leave the ants to go to their beds. It is coming up for rain, and mizzles somewhat already. Come in, and tell me about school this morning. I had not the luck to be at a school in my day," she went on to say, while the boys followed her in, and brushed the dust from each other's elbows and knees. "I had nothing to tell my poor father of Sunday evening, of what I had learned. So let me hear now. I am sure you were better children this morning."

On the occasion of Sunday evening, the children were indulged with the use of the fine, large footstool, which the late Mrs. Arruther had worked with her own hands as a wedding present for nurse's mother. When infants, it had been their weekly privilege to show their mothers which of the embroidered flowers was a rose, and which a heart's-ease, and which a tulip; and now that they were somewhat too old to confound them, and the tulip, they took it in turn to sit on the stool at their mother's knee, while they imparted their little learning to her who meekly received from her own children some scraps of knowledge which she had been denied the opportunity of gaining during her own young days.

'I warrant I know what set ye to look after ants,' said she. 'There is a bit about thes in the bible that I have heard read in church. Which of ye can read it to me, I wonder?'

Ambrose looked at Owen, and Owen looked doubtfully at the large old bible which Mildred reluctantly brought down from the shelf, at a price from her mother. Owen did not know where, in all that great book, to look for the bit about the ant. While he was turning over the pages, stopping to consider every great A he came to, Mildred wanted to know whether it was the ant that had tickled her face at church this morning, and hung from her hair by a thread smaller than she could see.

'It was of the nature of an ant, her mother thought. It had much the make of an ant: but was called a money-spinner.'

'Does it spin money?' asked Mildred quickly.
'O yes. My father used to tell me it would spin penny pieces from the ground up as high as the thatch.'

'And as high as the mill, perhaps?'

'I dare say. But my father did not tell me that, by reason of the mill not being built in his time.'

'I wish I had not put the money-spinner away,' said Mildred, thoughtfully. 'I wish I could get another.'

'Perhaps one will be sent to you one of these days, if you be a steady girl. And you will get many pieces, and perhaps silver as you grow older, if you look to the sheep as your master.'

would have you. Now, boys : have you f about the ant?"

No. They had found "Adam" near the ginning, and had got past "Aaron," and f that "Abimelech" was too long a word to b one they wanted. The "Ands" abounded to tantalize and perplex them exceedingly : when Owen recollects that "ant" might with a small "a," both came to a full stop. mother was kind enough, however, to say another part of the bible would do as well. might read her the piece they had read in s in the morning.

Owen began. He did his best ; never lo off the book, or sparing himself the troub spelling every word that he did not know his mother gained little by what he read. mixed his spelling with his reading so comple and varied his tone so little, not knowing th should render the stops as evident to his mot ear as they were to his eye, that she could nothing of the sense. The passage was : some priests carrying the ark over Jordan ; this was a puzzle to her. Her principal about Jordan was that almonds came the and she now therefore learned for the first that almonds came like fish out of the w and how the ark, which she knew had ea Noah and his family, and a pair of every li creature in the world, should itself be carrie the shoulders of a few clergymen, was what could not clearly comprehend. It happened Owen had been told that there were two

the difference between them ; but he did not remember to explain this : so his mother, who could not for the world wonder at any thing that could be found in the bible, supposed that it was right, sighed to think that her poor husband had not lived to witness his eldest boy's learning, and then smiled at Ambrose when it became his turn to try.

Ambrose was in the class below Owen. At present, he could read only by spelling every word. While he was about it, Mildred's eyes and attention wandered. The rain was now patterning against the lattice, and dripping from the thatch in little streams, which a ray from the parting clouds in the west made to glitter like silver. Then the light grew almost into sunshine on the floor of the room, and on the shelf where nurse had laid up the apparatus of her art. Mrs. Ede was employed by her few opulent neighbours as a nurse only ; but she was regarded as also a doctor by the poor residents in the village of Arne. She held herself in readiness, not only to visit them, night or day, when they were ill, but to administer to them from the phials and bottles red, yellow, and black liquids which stood on the shelf. These medicines now shone in the stern light so brilliantly as to catch her little daughter's eye ; and, while looking, Mildred observed two or three new articles of a strange construction which lay upon the shelf, or hung against the wall. She could not wait till Ambrose had done reading to ask what they were ; and she was answered as she might have known

she would be,—by a mysterious look, and a laid upon the lips. It was not only that brose was reading, but that it was utterly impossible to question Mrs. Ede about the circumstances of her art. Whether she was persuaded that knowledge as to her means would destroy faith in practice, or that she wished to preserve a coming degree of awe in her little ones by mystery in the one matter in which she was wiser than they,—it so happened that they had enticed her into the slightest confidence regarding the furniture of the south wall of her room. When Ambrose brought in the roots he had directed to procure on the heath, the basket and rusty knife were gravely delivered up, and received without a smile, and with only a very slight inquiry as to whether the roots had grown in moonshiny or shady piece of turf; and whether the dew was off or on when they were pulled up. Sometimes, when she was believed to be gone out for the day, one little sinner placed a stool for another to climb, that the mystery might be handled and smelled as well as tasted. Tasting was out of the question, so dangerous were the stories which they had heard of people who had fallen down dead with the drawing of a forbidden cork. Once, also, they returned unexpectedly when Owen had come from the mill, and Mildred from the mod. They were trying experiments with the long, thin, sharp, pointed, and slightly curved hair bandages; Owen in a corner, holding one end, and his sister at the opposite corner, twirling the other end, and herself round and round to see how many times she could revolve before she fell over.

long strip would fold about her body. What she had said by way of warning to Ambrose, when the exposure was made to him, might have taught her the uselessness of questions: but she got the incident of the bandage when she this morning offended again by her curiosity. She tried what she could to profit by Ambrose's reading, rocking herself and crossing her arms in imitation of her mother; but her eyes would still turn upon the shelf, and her heart could not help watching the kitten which had made a daring leap and was now thrusting in its nose, and making a faint jingle among the sacred vessels.

"This is what you should attend to, my dear," she explained, laying her hand upon the bible, when the boy was at length taking breath after his task. "The Lord gave the bible for little children to understand; and they should not ask if it is not proper for them to know."

"How are we to find out what it is proper for us to know?" asked Owen.

His mother told him that there would always be somebody at hand to tell him;—either Mr. Tugh, or the parson, or herself. She would do best, she was sure.

"I shall not ask Mrs. Arruther, I can tell," observed Owen. "She never lets Mr. Tugh alone about the Sunday school; and she has done all she can to set the parson against it."

"She is very strong in her mind against that school, indeed, Owen; and many's the time when she has been sharp with me for letting you learn, giving herself a bad opinion of learning for such

I hoped I was not out of my duty w
you go to the school, as Mr. Waugh
And I hope Ambrose and Mildred are
thankful for being allowed to go, as we
though not belonging to the paper-mill,
only to take their schooling every oth
when it is not their turn with the sheep.

" Ambrose can't keep up in the clas
as if he went every Sunday, like the oth
" The more reason for his making th
his time when he is there. Only think,
what it would have been for you to be o
hills every Sunday, away from the ch
no more able to read your bible than
trust, my dear, that you will be as we
Owen, though not perhaps so soon, (but
have time before you to go on learning
is done,) to read a chapter to me whe
old, and maybe not able to hear the clerg
church. But you must none of you
upon learning more than it is proper f
know, lest you should bring me to th
Mrs. Arwuthor has been right all the

Mildred lost no time in availing herself of this mission to play. Puss had disappeared ; but when called, she showed herself through a hole in the crazy wall of the cottage, and jumped upon Mildred all the way as she went to the door.

"Me ! where are all the clouds gone ?" exclaimed Mildred, shading her eyes with her hand, looking up into the sky. "Twas right black when you called me in ; and now it is all blue. There's not a cloud."

"They are all fetched up above the sky, my dear, to make a fine Sunday evening."

"I doubt whether the sheep will like it altogether as we do," observed Ambrose. "There is mist on their walk yonder ; and it is my belief their coats are heavy with wet at this very eve."

Ambrose was very consequential about sheep, there being no one at home to contradict anything he might say about creatures that he had more to do with than either mother or brother. What could be done was to question whether it grieved to the sheep whether they were more in mist on a Saturday or a Sunday evening. It made no difference to them, and they were soon and out of sight, it remained a fine Sunday evening to people below ; and that was enough to be thankful for.

While the whole party was gazing with shaded eyes towards the upland which was enveloped in a white cloud, through whose folds neither host nor man could at present be discerned, somebody seized little Mildred by the shoulders

from behind. Of course, being so wet, she screamed.

"Dear me, Ryan, is it you?" exclaimed the old man who had approached him. "And all dripping with the rain,—and all.—and we have no fire! But there is one presently. Boys, bring in some wood from the shed; and Mildred, strike a light. I never thought of standing in your wet clothes, but who would have expected to see you here, lying with your sack on a Sunday?"

Ryan would not be blamed for making a hasty call to see an old friend. He had a long walk, and a long hour's chat with nurse Ede, if she would let him. She dried his sack, and lay his head upon the sofa in the corner of her cottage. As for the fire, she was quite willing; and Ryan went up to the house-room: but she was engaged in some work, and could not be spared, so he was sorry to say, to sit up with Mrs. Ainsworth all night. She had promised to be at the house by nine o'clock. No time was lost. The warmth of the burning furze soon made Ryan feel as warm as on any summer's noon, and he lay down to sleep for chat and bread and eggs.

"So the poor old lady is ill, is she?"
"What, is she very bad?"

"Very bad. With all the trying, and getting down to the wound; and she is afflicted with spasms in the blood that make her heart turn round till I sometimes do not know whether it will ever come right again. She has had many such fits during the last few nights."

"If all be true that is said," declared Ryan.

ere is enough happening to bend her heart
breaks."

ow? What? Who was doing any harm to
Arruther?—There was no use in the chil-
dren asking and listening. This was one of the
secrets of knowledge not meant for them. They
find out no more than that the news related
to Mr. Arruther, the lady's son, and the member
of a small borough in the district; and that the
man had done something very wicked.
It was his crime could not be discovered.
Whether he had overlooked seams in sorting
wool, or let a lamb stray, or torn his clothes in the
church, and forgotten to mend them, or played
with the hassock at church, must be ascertained
after: but some one of these offences it must
be, as the children had heard of no others.

"And what is your news, Ryan?" asked his
mother in her turn. "Sure you must have some,
as you travel this way and that?"

"Ay; I have news. I have news plenty;
as you have hardly chanced to hear in your
village I fancy."

"Why, really! and yet I have lived in the
village when all the news about Buonaparte used to
come from the church almost every month, for a
year or something. It can hardly be anything
newer than that. Hark, children, hark! Mr.
Arruther is going to tell us some news. But I
suppose, Ryan, it is such as may be told on a Lord's
evening."

"Certainly. If my news be not diligently

spread, we may chance soon to have no Lord's day evenings. You may look sh— but what is to come of all Christian things the heathen come upon us ? and what he are so bad as the Turks, you know ?"

Mrs. Ede quailed with consternation, having heard of the Turks, and having no idea about heathens than that the bible them very bad people, and that (for so sh always taken for granted) they lived up heath—probably after the manner of gi She was afraid this bad news was too many opportunities as Mr. Ryan had for kn what was going on abroad.

"Indeed you are right, Mrs. Ede. It man from abroad that told me. He has not three months over from Hamburgh with h of rags from the Mediterranean ; and he in me that the Turks are coming up to take I and Europe, and make Turkish slaves of all Christians."

"The Lord have mercy ! And then, I pose, I had better not let my boy and girl g on the hills after the sheep. It will be sa keep them at home, won't it ? I would do out their little wages, rather than that they s light upon any Turks under the hedges, or in lane."

"You will have notice in good time, nbour. I myself will endeavour to let you the first minute I can. And if I don't, yo find it out by all the church-bells tolling, an battles on all sides through the country. O,

y bell that has a clapper will toll, partly to notice, and partly to see what the Turks can gainst the Christian bells of our Christian ches. Yes, every bell in the land will toll." Same as when the princess died," said Mil- . " I heard the great bell all the way from — that day, when I was on the hill-top. be I'll hear it again, if the wind come from way."

Indeed you shall not be on the hill-top, l, the day that the Turks come. Could you us an idea when it will be, Ryan ? It would pity but some of the ewes should yean first, is not dictating to the Lord to say so."

he enemy could hardly be coming just yet, n thought, as the Government was going to ge the Parliament, in hopes of getting one would be more fit to preserve the empire the present. Mr. Arruther would be soon ng into the neighbourhood to manage his ion ; and that event might serve in some as a token.

Mrs. Arruther would have known all about Turks, if everything had been right,—you v what I mean ?" said Mrs. Ede to her guest. it I suppose, as it is, I had better not men- anything of danger to the poor lady, sick as s."

By no means, unless she breaks the subject ou. Tell her other sorts of news. Tell her I and my sack are likely soon to come travel- at the rate of a hundred miles an hour."

O, Mr. Ryan, where will you find the horses

that will bring you at that rate? Why, a hundred horses would not bring you so quick as if you had money to hire them!"

Ryan smiled, and said that he meant to travel at this rate without horses at all. Ay; you might wonder at any one travelling at such a rate on foot; but the way was this:—there was a sort of road going to be made, on which never a horse was to set foot, and where, by paying half-a-crown to get upon it, a man and his baggage—and a woman too,—might do as he had said. It was to be called a rail-road.

Because it was to be railed in, no doubt it would keep off those who could not pay half-a-crown. Now, if the government could keep the end of this road, and let all its own people upon it, all might run away, so as to leave the Turks no chance of following. This seemed to open a prospect of escape; and nurse rose in better spirits, to put on her bonnet to go to Mrs. Athier's. A curious picture was before her mind's eye, of Ryan's gliding along a rail-road with a sack on his back, as fast as she had sometimes gone in dreams,—for all the world like a sledging on the ice in winter. The wonder was, that, if Ryan spoke truth, this curious road would be quite as efficacious on the hottest day of summer as after a week's frost.

When she had finished her little arrangements for the comfort of her guest, and bidden him good night, she called Ambrose out after her, and desired him to fetch cheese from the village grocer for Ryan's breakfast, the moment the shop should

opened. If he was there by the time the first
ter was taken down, he might cut for himself
Mildred a quarter of the cheese he should
g home. It would give a relish to their
d when they should have been after the sheep
a couple of hours, and feel ready for their
kfast on the hill-side.

CHAPTER II.**MATERNAL ANTICIPATIONS.**

There must be no communication with Mrs.
ither about the most important article of
n's news, nurse would have had no objection
lk it over a little on her way through the
ge; but she found no opportunity to do so.
e were no walkers to be seen enjoying the
of the evening by the side of the placid Arne,
flowed on towards the fall where it turned
wheel of Mr. Waugh's paper-mill. There
no husbands and wives sitting outside their
s, after having put their children to sleep.
e were no lingerers in the churchyard, talk-
over the sermon of the morning. A low,
ised murmur of suppressed voices issued
the narrow opening of the ale-house door,
stood ajar, and let a gleam of light from
n fall across "the road. Almost every in-
r was visible from being more or less lighted
but no one offered encouragement for a
of conversation in passing. Mrs. Dowley

was slapping her boy Tom because he would not go to sleep as she bade him ; and Mrs. Green, whose children were more obedient in this one respect, was dozing with her head upon the table, by way of whiling away the time till her husband should come home from the Rose. Kate Jeffery was reading to her grandfather as he sat in his great chair ; and it would not do to interrupt her, lest it should be the bible that she was reading. A knot of lads were gathered about the churchyard gate ; but their voices sounded so rude, that nurse, who was a somewhat timid woman, made a circuit to avoid passing through them. The porter at Mrs. Arruther's let her in with a studious haste which seemed to intimate that he thought her late ; and she did not stop to be told so. In the housekeeper's room she only tarried to see that her close cap looked neat and to pin on the shawl she always wore when she sat up at night. Mrs. Arruther had asked for her six times in the last ten minutes ; so there was not a moment to be lost.

" You were to come at nine o'clock, and it is ten minutes past, nurse," said the sick lady. " This is always the way people treat me,—as if there was not a clock in Arneside."

There were several clocks in Arneside, one of which it was two minutes past nine, another it wanted a quarter to nine ; a third was at half-past eight, and a fourth was striking three as nurse passed its door. But Mrs. E. never contradicted her patients. She told Ryan's arrival, and was admonished that no gu-

ers could possibly be of half so much importance as Mrs. Arruther.

I know how it is, nurse. It is those children yours that can do nothing for themselves, any more than any other children that are educated in the fashion is now. They will want you to wash their faces for them, and put them to bed, as long as they live, if you go on sending them to Sunday school."

Nurse was very sorry to hear this. She did know, in such a case, what they were to do when their faces washed when she should be buried to her grave, where she hoped to be long before her three children. But indeed she must pray for her little folks that they could all put themselves to bed, and had done it, even the best, these two years past.

Ay, ay ; that was before you sent them to school. Keep them there a little longer, and they will be fit for nothing at all. You never believe any warning I give you about it ; tell you again, the three last housemaids I had this year, one after the other, were the worst ever entered my doors ; and they could all read and write. What do you think of that ? My head ! My head !"

Nurse thought it was time that the draught should be taken, and proposed to smooth the pillow and shade the light. This done, she wound up the lady's watch, and sat down behind the screen, in hopes that the patient would sleep. But, however, there seemed but little chance. Arruther tossed about, and groaned out her

wonder why she could not go to sleep like other people, till nurse was obliged to take notice, and ask whether there was anything that she could do for her.

"Do! yes, to be sure. Bring out the light from wherever you have hidden it. It is bad enough not to be able to go out and see things, I have done all my life till now; and here you won't let me see what is in my own room. When are you going to put the light? Not under the picture. You know I can't bear that picture. And, mind, to-morrow morning—Bless me, what do you lift up your hand in that manner for?"

Nurse could only beg pardon. She had made an involuntary gesture of astonishment on hearing that the lady could not bear that beautiful picture of her own only son,—that picture which represented him in his chubby boyhood, standing at his mother's knee, with hoop in hand. She was told not to be troublesome with her wonder, but to see that the picture was carried up into the lumber garret to-morrow, and something put in its place to hide its marks on the wall; anything that would not stare down upon people as they lay in bed, as that child's eyes did. Rousing the wearied maid, just as she was falling asleep, nurse obtained a muslin apron, which when she stood on the table, she could hang over the picture: and two or three pins, judiciously applied below, obviated all danger of the picture rising with any breath of air, so as to disclose the features of the boy.

You had better take warning, and look to children in time, nurse, before they grow to plague you as my boy has plagued me." he had drawn back the curtain, and now wed herself as much disposed for conversation she had taken a waking instead of a sleep-lraught.

And you lay it all to education, ma'am ? think the university to blame for it ? Well ! hard to say."

What put such a notion into your head ? ever dreams of objecting to the university gentlemen ? You would not have my son ght up as ignorant as a ploughboy ; would ? No, no. I have done my duty by him hat way. He had the best-recommended s I could get for him, and every advantage ie university that was to be had ; and the proof of what was done for him is the credit ot there, and the prizes, and the reputation. is a very fine scholar. Nobody denies "

nurse pondered the practicability of putting question she would have liked to have had aned; whether learning had had the same effect Mr. Arruther that the lady had anticipated Owen and Ambrose. Nurse would fain whether Mr. Arruther could wash his own and put himself to bed.

Let us hope, ma'am, that the young gentlewill live and learn. If he is not able to do things now, perhaps——"

Little things ! What sort of little things ? "

" Well, ma'am, I thought if your late maids could not polish the fire-irons, or make bed to your liking, and if you fear that maids should not keep themselves clean when gone, because of their learning, perhaps... indeed, when I once saw the young gentleman his gloves were as white as my apron, and the sunshine came back from the polish of his hands I never saw a neater gentleman."

" He is a puppy," replied the tender nurse. " I suppose it was that dandy show of him that caught the eyes of the low creature he has married. If I never get the better of this match she shall have none of my clothes to wear. A shopkeeper's daughter shall be seen in them again, as my mother left to me. I had rather give them to you, nurse, at once."

" God forbid, ma'am ! What should I do with laces ? Such as I!"

" Very true. Now it is strange that a sensible woman like you, who knows what is proper in her own case, should be so wrong about children. What have they to do with education any more than you have with laces ?"

Nurse took refuge under the sanction of the clergyman and of Mr. Waugh ; and professed that she had as little idea of sending Owen Ambrose to the university, as of asking whether Mildred should wear the lady's family Vincennes and Mechlin.

" Well ; I wonder what it is that you have ! I can't make out what it is that you mean by at !"

Ma'am, if I had all I wished for—but I as well be setting on a cup-full of broth to me, as I fancy you may take a liking to a , by-and-by."

The lady let nurse do this. When she was of wondering whether she could take any when it should be warm, she languidly

Go on. What would you have for your men? Pray remember what I have heard say yourself—that pride comes before a fall." And a much greater one than I said that e me, ma'am. But I would not have my men made proud, because I should be sorry should fall below what they are. If I had wish, it would be that Owen should have at the mill as long as he lives, so as to be sure of eighteen shillings a week for a uance; and that he should marry such a s Kate Jeffery, who would take as much of his house as I would myself; and that hould never want for shoes and stockings eir children's feet. And much the same nbrose."

Is that all? They might have all this with ading and writing."

erhaps so, ma'am; but Kate reads to her father of a Sunday evening, as I saw when sed to-night; and the neighbours think, ll as I, that it is the boys that get on ith their learning that go straightest to work; not swinging on the churchyard or swearing, to get a look that they may

make game of from grave people passin
As for Mildred, I don't well know what t
'Tis hard work for poor girls when they
and have their families early : but then, I
be loth to leave her to live solitary in o
tage, spending her days all alone upon th
However, that will be as the Lord p
Meantime, I should best like that fifteen
hence, when the boys will be perhaps
away, my girl should be keeping our plac
for me, and giving me her arm to churc
helping me with her little learning when, s
happens, I am at a loss to answer, for v
knowing. I have no wish to be idle, I ar
I hope to knit her stockings and make her
coats still, if she will clean the cupboar
and entertain the clergyman better than
do."

The clergyman was not present to sta
inquiry whether such were the sum total
purposes for which spiritual beings were b
into a world teeming with spiritual influ
If he had been there, he might not, pe
have got a curtsey from nurse by telling h
her views were quite proper, and that she r
understood what to desire for her young
Perhaps he might have thought little bet
Mrs. Arruther's aspirations.

" My boy has cruelly disappointed me
declared: " and yet I wished for no more
had a right to expect from him. I wishe
he should be a good scholar ; and so he
wished that he should have the looks and
ners of a gentleman."

And sure, ma'am, so he has?"

"Yes: and I hoped to see him in parliament if it was only for once; and I carried this and mean to carry it again, if I can. He parliament with my money, and he shall enough for the next election. But there's d. Instead of marrying as I wished, he ken up with a tradesman's daughter; and ty make the best of his bargain. Not an of my land, nor a shilling of my money can leave away, shall he have. If I am ointed in him, I will have my satisfaction. do what I can to show people that they take care what they expect from their en. He sha'n't have all the laugh on his He sha'n't say for nothing that my be- r to him is unpardonable."

she wondered whether at the university ought to forgive and forget. If they did, s the young gentleman would be bent making up matters, if he thought himself on; and then there might be a coming on the other side.

I don't know what they do there about for- ; but I am sure they teach the young men get. He never wrote to me above once, t year he was there; and that was for

And he never thought more of his Ellen, though I told him to marry her, uested him to send her down a lap-dog ae. When I asked him what he meant e said Ellen and all had entirely slipped nory. I told him my mind, pretty plainly;

so I suppose it will slip his memory that hereabouts, when he comes down to his e If he tries the gate—”

“ O, ma’am! You will not turn him aw

“ No : it might cost him his election; don’t wish that. I should miss my own from the newspapers then ; and it would be to lose my pleasure in the newspapers. do nothing to hurt his election. He shall in to see me ; and then I will say to him that lawn and those fields, and all this house the plate would have been yours very soon. I can’t live long,) if you had married cousin Ellen, as I bade you : but it is too late now ; and Ellen’s husband shall have ——’—What do you look in that way for, I am not going to leave it into another Ellen’s husband shall take my name before it touches a shilling.”

“ And if a judgment should come up meantime, ma’am. If the heathen should not you say there is to be a new election? Is not that the same as the government goes to a new parliament ?”

“ To be sure.”

“ And that is done when a danger is to be at hand, is not it ?”

“ Not always ; and if it was, no harm would come to my property. The deeds are in my lawyer’s hands,—in his strong-box enough.”

It was plain that Mrs. Arruther knew about the approach of the Turks ; and it

rueful to tell her, when she might very likely before they appeared in Arneside.

What are you afraid of, nurse? I am sure are in a panic about something. It is too for your boys to be marrying against your I suppose?"

Yes, thank God. And they will never be to marry so far below them as your young leman may do; for the reason that they will stand so high as he. But yet I can fancy if my Owen took to a giggling jade, with hair hanging about her ears, and a sharp e, it would weigh heavy on my heart."

And your money would weigh light in his et, hey?"

I shall have no money to leave, ma'am; and _____,

No money to leave! I dare say. You never have money to leave while you throw away services as you do. I did wonder at you week, when you managed to find somebody to sit up with old Mr. Barnes, that you might e Widow Wilks's child. I saw beforehand would come of it. The child died, just the as if you had been with Mr. Barnes; and missed your chop, and brandy and water, the handsome pay you would have had; and Barnes is a nice, mild old gentleman, that might have been glad to nurse. I thought knew your duty to your children better than aste your services in any such way."

urse was very sorry the lady was displeased what she had done. She had acted for the

these things against her when she was

" You seem to be always thinking he
will be after you are gone. What will
signify when you are cold in your grave

" It seems natural, ma'am, when one
dren to care for. I hardly think that G
us children only that we may play w
while they sprawl about and amuse us, a
use of them while they are subject to
having no steady one of their own. I
the yearning that mothers have after th
and daughters when they are grown up
and women, that it must be meant for u
a hold over their hearts when they ha
acting by our wills. And so, when
what is to happen when I am gone, it is
feeling that I dare not go and appear be
without doing my best to have my child
of me as one that tried to do her dut
and them."

uld make no difference between him and
est. My father's bible is, as they know, to
the one that can read in it best when I am
y death-bed ; and the other few things are
equally divided. My girl is to have my
ing-wheel ; and the deal table will be
a's ; and the chair and three stools——”
Those things are to your children, I suppose,
the same as my lawn and this house to my
”

I dare say they would be, ma'am ; and, in
sense, all property that is left by the dying
e living seems to be much alike, whether it
eat, or whether it be little. To my mind,
not so much the use of a legacy to give
ures to those that can enjoy little pleasure
a parent or other near friend is taken away,
leave the comfort of feeling that the de-
d wished to be just and kind. It is all very
you see, that my girl should have the use
y spinning-wheel ; but if it was made of
Solomon's cedar wood, Mildred's chief
re would be to think, while she spun, that
embered her kindly when I lay dying ; and
is, a spinning-wheel does as well as a room
f pictures, or a mint of money. And when
a family quarrelling and going to law about
father's legacies, I cannot but think how
better it would be for them if each of the
ters had but a spinning-wheel, and each of
ns neither more nor less than a deal table,
e chair their father sat in.—But,” lowering
oice, “ here am I chattering on without

more softly drew the curtain. When, lence, nurse began to consider what, i ness of her heart, she had been sayin thunderstruck at her own want of goo in uttering what must have seemed in a reproof to the lady about her cond son. Her heart beat in her throat as tence after another of her discourse upon her memory. What was she should be lecturing Mrs. Arruther?—B the lady had been too drowsy to listen to be hoped so, rather than that she sh pose that nurse was paying her off for sition to the children's going to the sch

When sufficiently composed for the duty which she never omitted, nurse ad usual prayers the petition that this suf might be spared till she could see clear was just that she should do towards th had displeased her. Before she had there was another movement, and a "O dear!" from within the curtain.

"I hoped you had been asleep, ma'

, nurse. I cannot bear the thought of it. events my getting to sleep. I believe I shall close my eyes all night."

nurse really thought she would, if she would take the other draught, and settle her mind trouble herself about nothing till to-morrow.

CHAPTER III.

LESSONS ON THE HILLS,

ATCH down a plate from the cupboard, Am-, and cover up the beer, while I cut the se. I suppose we may have a quarter of the e, as mother said," observed Mildred to rose, as the early sun was peeping in through pper panes of the cottage lattice the next ing.

Yes; we may have the quarter. I was at shop before the first shutter was down.—here's a plate for Mr. Ryan's cheese. will carry ours in the paper I brought it in. shall I keep puss from getting at the things? t that Mr. Ryan stirring?—Mr. Ryan! Mr. !?" (calling through the door.) " Please to to your breakfast here, that the cat does not . We are going now; and Owen is gone mill; and mother is not home yet."

Off with you, lad!" answered Ryan from a. " Leave the cat to me. And if you can up any rags for me among the briers, you I always give honest coppers for them;

and yet more for tarred ropes, if such an ~~as~~ comes in your way."

" Tarred ropes ! How should we get ~~to~~ If tar by itself would do, I could help you some of that. The shepherds always keep against the shearing. Would tar by itself

The loud laugh from within showed Ambrose that he had said something foolish ; and hastily departed, supposing that Mr. Ryan had been making a joke of him.

Cool and moist as all had been in the morning as they passed, the children found that the sun was gone from the furze-bushes on the hill, and that the sun was very warm.

" What had we better do ? " asked Mildred, contemplating the yellow cheese, which began to shine almost as soon as she opened the paper.

" Shall we eat it directly ? I think I am beginning to be very hungry ; are not you ? It will be half melted, and the bread dry, if we carry it about in the sun."

" Mother said we were to keep the sheep a couple of hours first," was Ambrose's answer.

" And besides, I have some leaves to give her ; and they won't be fit if I let them stand in the dew ; and it is off already, except on the shady side of the bushes. Put the bread under the shady side of this bush ; I'll look for it.—Do you go about and get some rags, or can find any. The briars and hedges are most likely places."

" There won't be any Turks under the hedge will there ? " asked Mildred, lowering her head.

I don't know. I don't rightly know what are ; but if anything happens amiss, call loud to me, and I'll come. Go ; make haste. Sheep are quiet enough."

And how are we to know when two hours over ?"

We must each guess, I suppose ; and if we agree, we'll draw lots with a long spike of and a short one. The long one for me, now, because I'm the eldest."

forty minutes, both were agreed that two were over ; and each complimented the on the fruits of the morning's work. Am exhibited a handful of leaves, which he d under a big stone, that they might not be away ; and Mildred brought the foot of a ed stocking, which she had found in a ditch ; her of a blue cotton handkerchief with white which had been impaled on a furze bush ; bit of white linen as large as the palm of tle hand, with twenty holes in it. How coppers would Ryan be likely to give her is treasure ?

abrose rejected the worsted article, to which ister gave a sigh as she saw it thrown ards among a group of sheep, who scam away in their first terror, but soon gathered er to look at the fragment. The other ight be worth the third part of a farthing, Ryan should be in a liberal mood, Am thought.

wonder how much paper they will make," ed observed. " Mr. Ryan says they are

to go into his sack with the rest of his rags, or paper. Mother did not tell you what she wants the leaves for, I suppose?"

"No; and I sha'n't ask her. Do you ever hear people talk about what mother makes?"

"Why, yes; I do. Molly at Mrs. Arruthers was telling the gipsy woman one day about mother; and she said she had some strange secrets. And then they asked me what one thing meant, and another. But they did not mean to hear all they said, any more than Mrs. Dowley when she winked at her husband, and glanced down at mother's apron where some green things were peeping out; but it was only cabbage that time. They all think her a very wise doctor."

"How they do send after her when they are ill! Mr. Yapp said one day that she would be wise to bring up one of us to be a doctor for her; but Mrs. Dowley was there then, and said it could not be, because mother's was of a nature of a gift that could not be taught.—Here is your other bit of cheese. Will you have it now, or keep it till dinner?"

Mildred had intended to reserve part of the cheese for dinner; but having now nothing particular to do, and the sheep offering nothing which required her attention, the whole of the delicacy at length disappeared, crumb by crumb. Then she lay back, looking at a flight of birds which now met, now parted, now crossed each other in all directions, high in the air. Ambrose meanwhile stretched himself at length, with his face to the ground, watching a hairy brown caterpillar.

he took the liberty of bringing back with a pinch by the tail, as often as it flattered that it was getting beyond his reach. He only wished that they had a pair of scissors between them.

"Won't the knife do as well?" Mildred languidly inquired.

"I want to cut off the creature's hair." "What creature?" asked Mildred, starting up, seeing no creature with hair, but a remote shadow and herself.

"Here: this young gentleman," replied her master, exhibiting the writhing caterpillar on the palm of his brown hand. Well might the creature feel uncomfortable; for this hand which had been handling cheese must have been far from fragrant, in comparison with the thyme-bed on which the caterpillar had been disporting himself. What she wanted was to see whether it would not cut a common green caterpillar, when it was cut off of its long sleek hairs. The process of cutting was tried in the absence of scissors: the material was too fine. The knife was applied, but the creature was destined never to have been shorn. A slip of the knife cut through, and fetched blood on Mildred's finger at the same time. The perturbation thus caused completely awakened her, and she was ready for the part of shepherd and shepherd's dog. For a long time, Ambrose supported his dignity as a shepherd. He strapped himself round with his master's pinafore and his own for a plaid; took

last, as much alarmed as at first, obliged to stop to laugh at them. A come to an end; and by-and-by t were stretched, panting, on the very they had breakfasted. To panting yawning; and it began to occur to bo had yet a long day to pass before the be penned. It was against the rules ployment that both should sleep a time; and, as Mildred could not kee was necessary for her brother to wat not, as usual, wakened by his calling to some of his charge as to rouse her dream was done. She finished it, eyes, sat up and stretched herself; an was too busy to take notice.

"I had such a queer dream!" ob dred.—Her brother did not hear.

"I say, Ambrose, I dreamt that ing rags at the mill, and there was a upon every one of them: and—Wh

ut you can help me with this part, perhaps. tell you what I have read when I know this

The man would not go in somewhere ; is word tells where."

dred pored over the soiled piece of print, pronounced presently that the word in questionified something about a comb. In her g-book, c-o-m-b spelled comb. But of t of the word,—“ inat,”—“ in,”—What t be ?

ends with ‘ nation.’ ‘ Comb ’—‘ nation.’ I must let that alone. There was a man ould not go into this place,—whatever it is, the people that were in it were angry be- ne went to his work.”

because he did not go to his work, I suppose an.”

; because he would go when they bade t. And they watched for him one day e was going to work, and his little boy m. They call him a little boy, though he even years old. They flew upon the man, imped him and kicked him as hard as ever uld. And when the boy cried, and begged ould not use his father so cruelly, one of aught up a thick rope, and beat the boy as a shocking sight to see him.”

ey were cruel wretches. I wonder whether as anybody near to go for the constable ? y get a constable ?”

suppose so, for the people were asked how ed to beat people so.”

d what did they say ?”

"This that I can't make out, about going
and not going in: but they got a good scolding
—and that is as far as I have got."

"See what is to be done to them, and where
there is anything more about the boy."

Another half-hour's spelling and consulting
revealed that the child had pulled and consulted
assailants down by the leg, and thus turned
fury of the man upon himself; that it was dou-
ful whether the boy would recover; and that
this being the case, the decision of the magis-
trates was that—

Here came the jagged edges of the torn
paper, instead of the magistrates' decision.
was very disagreeable indeed. Not to know
became of the aggressors, and whether the
boy lived or died, was cruel. Ambrose
away the paper, and grew cross. Mildred's
solutions,—that very likely the boy was well
this time, and she had no doubt the boy was well
were put in prison,—were of no use. A less
device than to imagine the issue of no use. A less
to Ambrose. He would go and suggest
The paper having come from Mr. Yapp's
he no doubt knew the end of the story. Co-
not Mildred look after the flock while he
down now? No harm could come to the
during the little time that he should come to the

Mildred did not like this plan,—was su-
moter would not like it. Ambrose had
read the story over again, to try and un-
it better; and she would go with him
Yapp's when the flock was penned, in

Never did the oriental scholar pore more intently over a new tablet of hieroglyphics than two children over the fragment of a police ticket which had fallen in their way. To no one can it be so important to ascertain a full point of history, or to develope facts of costume and manners of a remote people, as to these young creatures to learn the issue of the case in which rights like their own were involved, and filial sympathies like their own were involved.

Again, during the day, Ambrose called to his mother that he had something to say to her, and she knew that it must relate to the story he had, so complete was the possession it had of his mind. He thought the people round were great fools for not punishing the aggressors at the spot. If he had been there, he would not have waited to hear what the magistrates said ; . He would have knocked down every person that he could get at, if it were by ; by the leg as the poor boy had done. "And then," said Mildred, "they would have given you the same as the boy ; and if anybody taken your part, they would have served him right. I don't think that would do any

"nothing like a battle," exclaimed Ambrose, with his cap over his head. "I like a good fight better than all the justices and gentlemen in the world."

"I don't like battles," Mildred observed. "I don't much mind seeing you and Sam Dobbs

pavement ; and you might have heard t
of his head as far as the pump, I'm sure
was such a quantity of blood that I cou
my supper ! I should not like to se
battle often !"

" O, only tell me when anybody does
harm, and see how I will fight for you."

" I am sure I shall not tell anything
if you go and fight in that manner.
ask mother or Owen to go with me t
Gibson. If you consider, there would
ing all day long in our place, and muc
L_____, if all people chose to battle it o
of going to the Justice. And besides
the Justice can take much better care of
little boy than anybody that just fought
for him, and then went away."

Ambrose saw this ; and before dinner
both the children had learned, after t
fashion, how far superior law is to v
and security to retaliation. Confined
ideas were (the picture of their own litt

evening came. The sheep were penned, and children were standing before Mr. Yapp's door, pushing each other on to the feet of the grocer for the rest of the story. They Mr. Yapp's eyes turned on them once or ; but they could not get courage to make f the opportunity. It was Mr. Yapp himself at last brought on the crisis.

"Come, younkers," said he, "make your way make your way off. Don't stand in my preventing people coming in."

Mildred moved off; Ambrose bolted in; and his sister came up to reinforce him. As rocer had nothing very particular to attend the moment, he did not crush the aspiration knowledge. He directed the children to the age of paper from which their fragment had taken, and looked over the story himself.uld have been too long a task for such poor ars to seek for what they wanted by reading. Compare the jagged edges of the paper was a readier method; and Mildred did this, Mr. Yapp gave her brother some imperfect (for he was not learned on the subject) what bination was, and why a man was ill-treated ot entering into one. This was worth g for; but it was all. Mildred's search nsuccessful. The rest of the story was ir erable. Many customers, some from distant and cottages, had been at the shop to-day; t was impossible to say who had carried

Ambrose begged for his paper back again.

There was something on the other side I wanted to show to Owen.

"Let's see," said Mr. Yapp. "Why looks like magic,—all these waves, and d and dots, and signs. O, ho! it is short-hand. Somebody advertises to teach short-hand. There, take it to Owen, and see what he makes of it."

Ambrose turned the paper about, but saw nothing like a hand. What could be made of short-hand?

A way of writing short, he was told; and remained as wise as he was before. But Miss Selina Yapp, who stood smiling behind the counter, was desired to give the children a dozen raisins apiece; and it was quite time to be going home.

Their mother was looking out for them from the door.

"Why, mother, are you going to be out to-night? Sure the lady must be very bad."

"I am not going to the lady till morning, dears. 'Tis poor neighbour Johns I am going to. Sadly sunk he is; and his old wife is nigh worn out. So I've made my bit of fit for her here; and it is full time she was off. So, troop to bed, dears. Get your suppers and undress; and be as still as mice, sleeping and waking, when she comes in. Put your lesson away till to-morrow, Owen, my boy. You won't eat your paper before morning, I daresay if you put it where it will be safe. You've had your supper; so now to bed, my boy. You'll

all the earlier in the morning. But be you put on your shoes the last thing, lest should wake the old woman with your er."

wen's eye had been completely caught by the serious figures of the short-hand specimen. He it between his teeth while he undressed, and on looking at it by the twilight, after he was d, till his brother and sister had done talking ; then he put it under his bolster. Ambrose, itime, stuffed his mouth with his supper very atigably, and yet managed to get out his of the little boy who had been beaten for iding his father. Following his mother t wherever she moved, he made her mistress e whole before he had done.

rs. Ede was not disappointed at their saying ng about her sitting up again to-night. To , it was so much a matter of course that she ld sit up professionally, and to her that she ld do what she could for a needy and suffer-ighbour, that the circumstance did not seem ny of remark. All were more occupied with red's disappointment. It was feared that Ryan was gone from the village this evening, hat he would not come on his rounds again alf-a-year. He had himself bid Mildred look gs ; and now he was gone before she came ! Her bits of blue and white must stand till he appeared again ; for Owen did not any money would be given for them at the Nurse stayed yet five minutes longer, to ort her little daughter under this mischance ;

failing like neighbour Johns ; if it shou
God I should live till then. But, dear
a puckered old face mine will be the
like their smooth rosy cheeks. 'Tis a
thing for two old folks to be left without
unfit to take care of one another,
neighbour Johns and his dame ; and ye
would be for me that have laid my husb
grave so long ago. But if God spares
little ones, and my girl stays near me
not care what else betides. Bless them
sweetly they do breathe in their sleep
now, I must go and send the dame to
I trust she will be thoughtful not to
children ; and I'm sure they will be kind
towards her in the morning."

CHAPTER IV.

SIGNS IN THE SKY.

Upon the whole, she had reason to be ed with them, though there was a wider ence in their characters and attainments than could have wished to see. She did not grow ss about what, she supposed, came by na- She concluded it to be God's will that should be "as sharp as a briar," active in isiness, ready about bringing home things nt and wonderful to hear, and looked upon s employer and the village at large as a youth who would one day be a credit to tive place. Nurse concluded it to be God's hat Owen should be thus, while his brother ister were far from being like him. What made them dull she scarcely knew; unless it eing out so much on the hills without com- ns, or anything to do but to look after the and knit. They had lost their little learning and did not now like going to the Sunday- l, as they forgot during the week what they earned the Sunday before, and became ed of growing so tall while they knew so of what was looked for in a Sunday-school. me, too, it was a great temptation to nurse ly to Owen when she wanted to speak about ing that interested her, or to have any little ss transacted: he comprehended so much readily, observed so much more justly, and thised so much more warmly than his bro- nd sister. But nurse was very conscientious making no differences in her treatment of ildren; and she took pains to bring forward unger ones, continually saying to herself,

how very steady Ambrose was, and she ought to be for a daughter dred, made no difficulty of doing wh asked, as soon as she understood w

Contented as she thought it he nurse could not be otherwise than a change took place in the family which seemed to open to Ambrose advantages which his brother had e had risen from sorting rags in the of higher trust, and requiring greate ments than were necessary for the tion of paper-making. He was superior personage in the mill. It ness to superintend some processes facture ; to give the necessary noti cisman when any paper had to be to be reweighed by the supervisor sent out for sale ; to see that the ex observed as to the lettering of the di and the numbering of the engines, and presses ; to remind his emplo time approached for purchasing the y and (fearful responsibility !) to tal the labels which were to be pasted ream. Nurse used to call Ambro and say how he should like such a Owen related that if one label shoul employer would be liable to a pena and that, as it was necessary to convenience to purchase five hundr time, the destruction of one lot w him to be fined 100,000l.

n rather enjoyed his responsibility ; and, new sense of dignity, set about his studies leisure hours with more zeal than ever.— was better, he entered with all possible ness into his mother's project of getting her into the mill before his honest influence r. Waugh was exerted for any other object. augh had not the least objection to make f another son of Mrs. Ede's. He had hat the lad was not over-bright ; but he ut try ; and if he did not succeed, there ill flocks to be kept on the heath as be- So Ambrose, with a smile on his sun- face, made ready, the next Monday morn- set forth, with his brother, for the mill. you find it rather close," said his mother " being under a roof from six o'clock to ,

I am to come out for breakfast and din- ther."

was going to say, you can get a good deal i the two hours allowed for meals. And n't think much of the air on the hills ou have so much company about you. if there being thirty men in the mill, and men, besides the children ! You can e dull ; and you must bring me home the s. Owen always did.—The dullness will Mildred, when she has not you for a com- any longer. I say, Mildred, my dear ; st take care and not lose your tongue." ed did not know that she should have

used to do in my father's time. There's plenty, I am sure, from end to end of the hills; and why should you keep within such a narrow range as you have kept hitherto? You have legs to carry you, and you have eyes to keep your flocking with another. Why should you keep company with somebody that may be knitting like you, all alone, and without a chat?"

"There's Maude Hallowell of the *Island* just above the Birchen dale; but that's a way off," replied Mildred.

"A long way! Well, I wonder if she uses young limbs, to call the Birchen dale a long way! Try it, my dear; and see if she should come over to your turn. But she won't see such a sight as this, if the day be clear, when you can see the high point of the ridge over Birchen dale, and I once saw the sea glistening, miles away, through a gap of the hills!"

"And the island mother?"

Isle of Man was spoken of with great awe by the people here, as untaxed islands are by their neighbours of a taxed country were the little secret privileges enjoyed out this district, even as far as the village beside,—privileges of participation in various things slyly brought from the island, in addition to all the preaching of the wine-merchants and wholesale grocers of L——, and beside, of the clergyman and Mr. Waugh, cur-maker. All the children attached ideas very to the island, which they perpetually mentioned and had never seen; and the nearer any nearer to it,—the actually seeing the spot which it lay, was regarded as an approach to the revelation of a great secret. Mildred she should like to go and look for

dy had imagined what an event these sons would prove to the whole family. It put more new ideas into their minds than all day schooling had done.

She was something of a scholar in her way. She could be found sitting in the heather, her hair pulled back to her chin, and her plaid drawn over her shoulders, poring over a particular sort of pamphlet which was the only work she was much disposed to read. Her distaff lay on the ground beside her, while she was studying; and when she set it up, she was apt to look into the sky, not seawards, instead of minding her work. She invariably started when Mildred

sne might possibly nna a scanty sha
birch.

" My eyes ? I'm sure I don't kno
Maude, winking, as if to reduce her
natural dimensions. " I don't know
my eyes. But I've such a thing to t
takes away my breath to think of it."

" The heat's enough for that. The
has hied away, and it is as hot——
the clouds would come up."

" There will be clouds enough by
water enough at least,—clouds or n
Maude solemnly averred. " Has yo
told you anything about the comet?"

" No. If it is anything bad, I dou
she knows it; for she was merry e
morning."

" Merry enough, I dare say. Not
These are not the sort of things yo
does not know, as I heard a person say
Do but you ask her about the comet, i
way, and see what she will say. No

What will it drown? Not our poor sheep?"
our sheep and us too. My dear, the sea
is pouring through that gap, and fill up
now, and leave us no footing on all these
islands. Oh, my poor mother! I must go and tell my
Mildred, "exclaimed Mildred,
g up from her blossomy seat.
our mother will be safe enough," Maude
constrainedly.
"Safe! How? Why?"
"Hem!"
"Now, Maude, do tell me what you mean.
you sure?"
"Yes, that I am; and you may know when
coming, by the signs. The book tells the
but you must hold your tongue about
the book says, for fear of bringing on the
sooner than it need. There will be black
coming up first, with thunder and light-
That is to be this summer, while the stars
in a particular way. I'm going to stay
to-night, to see how the stars stand.
bide with me, Mildred?"
lred shivered as she reminded her com-
panions how far she had to travel home: but Maude
said that it would be necessary to see how
the stars stood, in order to find out afterwards
when they began to move on and cross each
other. But before the three great stars came
out in the sky, a cruel enemy was to rise
against the land, and there were to be some
great battles. This revived Mildred's old

terrors about the Turks ; and Maude more solemn than ever when she heard many years it was since nurse Ede had told her of the Turks. By a natural association of mind Maude went on to explain that those who were in the confidence of the unseen powers, and might be said to have brought on themselves, would be in no danger. They would be safe amidst the storm they had raised, on the surface of the flood like straws all others, as far as the flood should sweep them away; but would, it was strongly apprehended, be destroyed unless they made use of "the precautions recommended in the supplement to this pamphlet &c. &c." Those who were to be preserved would have warning of the approach of the crisis by a slight, dull pain in the ankles, while the careless and confident would have another warning of the approach of the crisis by a slight, dull pain near the nape of the neck. So, Mildred was to keep watch over her mother, watching what her mother might say about herself, and to take fright directly if she felt a slight pain in the ankles or a dull pain near the nape of her own neck.

When she was sufficiently recovered from her illness, she found that it was a curious-looking book indeed, with a great number of little moons and stars, and the picture of a wise man, and of a large comet with a long tail. She could not but believe now what Maude had told her.

How they were to get the other information about preserving themselves,—was the question. This book had come over with the

l; but not direct into Maude's hands. It bound its way over the moors from shepherd epherd; and no one now seemed to know nom it belonged, and who might be ex- d to procure the supplement. Owen, who so much to do with paper, and who knew bout printing and books, was certainly the person to apply to; and Mildred earnestly ed the loan of the pamphlet, that she might it to him.

"Ah, if I might!" replied Maude: "but am Scott is to have it next; and then is to show it to her father. I dare not let direct to your brother; but when the others done with it—I'll quicken them in the ng, and then hide it under yonder big stone. here is a dry chink where nobody will think ing. You may find the book here, early week. But, for your life, don't let Owen it. If he goes and blabs, there is no say- hat will become of us all."

Mildred did not know what worse could befall according to the book, must happen at all ; and she thought Owen might as well be d as the many people who were already inted with the prophecy.

"Wish," observed Maude, "the book said quarter the first storms would come up ' And as she spoke she looked towards a.

"Ah, how black it is there!" Mildred anx- observed. "It is coming up for—for— Don't you fear so? O Maude, let us be

gone ! Maude, do, for pity sake, go way home with me."

Impossible. Maude must make her way to her own home. If Milhaste, she might perhaps get to Arne the clouds burst. And this affection hied down the hill as fast as she could, she should send one of her brothers to the sheep. The companion whom she sacrificed to the utmost was left to shift for himself and his flock. The cry of "Maude ! " followed her far on her way ; but she turned and waved her hand, to advise her friend to hasten homewards.

Mildred's flock did not seem to have observed the signs of the sky. It was still sunshine where they cropped the sward, and they were unwilling to leave the sheltered glade. Mildred had never known them so sluggish in obedience ; and when, at last, the overcast sky conveyed to them that a storm was coming, they only huddled together, instead of running off, and began to bleat and fret in a very piteous way. Mildred began to tremble in her flutter ; but probably the sheep did not find it out ; for it made no difference in their proceedings. Their mistress was now deciding that she must leave them to their own wills, and take care of herself ; and a peal of thunder, nearly over head, confirmed her resolution. On she pressed, along the ridge, where there seemed to be no more air than in the thicket in the dale. She panted with exertion,

tly that she was compelled to stop, though d by thunder-clouds, and dreading above ings to encounter the lightning alone. It in broad sheets of flame, and not a drop of yet to put it out ; as Mildred would have

When she reached the point of the ridge which she must turn into her own valley, st one more glance behind her towards her

She had never seen the hills look as they -day. Their tops were shrouded in dark- and in the bottom all was nearly as murky he sun had long set. The flock might just n in a cluster below the mists upon the hill-side. At the moment when Mildred ered them, the clouds seemed to open, and a stream of blue flame upon them. She ed ; but there was no one to hear her. In er instant, the poor animals were seen red far apart ; and their mistress believed he saw one stretched on its side ; the only ow on the spot from which they had just She loved every individual sheep of her more or less ; but she could not at present to see which she had lost. She scuddled sed in mind as to whether she should go or stop at some friendly house in the vil- Her mother's presence had formerly been fuge whenever she was frightened ; but ie hesitated between a desire to see what said about the storm, and a dread lest she have had something to do with it. She have left the point to be settled by cir- unces.

It was impossible to walk the
her hands before her eyes. She
looked up, she found that the sky
too quick for her : the storm
was upon her. It seemed gathering about
the grey church looked almost wth
murky back-ground. Another
into the midst of the large yew in
under which Mrs. Arruther's habi-
ment stood, looking almost new
iron rails round it. The tree wa^s
magic. Mildred was too far off to see
crash ; and to her it seemed as if the
ing tree had been reached by a hand
whose touch it fell asunder, and
ground in a circle. In horror she
back to the spectacle ; and the dim
ition came into her mind that so
mysteriously, that her mother ha-
tained great influence over Mrs.
others, that it might have been
Arruther to have seen less of nui-
At this moment, it seemed as if she
been sent on a mission to Arneside
for westward all was again bright
which was seldom distinguished
point, lay like a golden line in the sky.
Mildred could not but turn again
progress of the storm. On it spe-
giving out as yet no rain. It was
dreary district which now lay be-
of clouds. A single farm, two miles
side, was the only visible habita-

ghtning came down among the group of ings ; and before it had travelled far, a of smoke rose among the barn roofs, and glimmer succeeded, which Mildred consi-as kindled by some malicious power which ht its will through the elements. The rain attered heavily on the crown of her head, e ran, far more swiftly than before, down village. Instead of turning to her mother's she directed her steps through the village on her way to the mill. About the middle she found Ambrose, standing very quietly s hands in his pockets, staring at a picture headed a bill pasted up against a dead wall. ook at the fellow ! going to fly off from il of the windmill, with a flourish of his tail," said Ambrose to a companion, as d came up. "I wonder what it means ?" "hy, read what it means, man ; where's the your learning ?" asked the other. "I e those big black letters stare one in the , they might of themselves almost teach a o read." , but I lost my learning while I was a rd. Mr. Waugh was right mad with me er day, because I could make nothing of ections of the parcels I had to sort out. been getting up my reading a bit with this week ; but you may as well tell me hat fellow is with the long tail. I shall be r making it out for myself." ell, then : 'tis a little rogue of a devil out to see the world ; and——"

"O, Ambrose, the storm!" cried his

"Ay, the tree is down in the church
have been seeing it; and here is a s
brought away. Me! here comes the
fine pepper we are going to have."

"I hope it will pepper hard enough.
Mason's barns are on fire. Won't you
help?"

"Who told you so?—Which barn
did it get on fire?" and many other q
which might wait till the next day, ha
answered before anybody would stir to
key of the engine-house; and then, se
youths ran foul of one another, and diff
to where the key was deposited, and we
bent on being the one to tell the clergyma
Mildred had given the alarm at the pap
before anything effectual was done.

Mr. Waugh and Owen were together
counting-house, looking at a pamphlet
Mr. Waugh had just put into Owen's han

"That's the almanack, I do believe,
Mildred. "O, I wanted so that you shou
that almanack."

Mr. Waugh explained (Owen being too
absorbed) that this was not an almanack
tract which he was lending to Owen. Ow
going to take it home, as he was very e
read it; but Mr. Waugh feared there wo
little in it to amuse any of the family besi
was not so entertaining, he feared, as a
nack from the island: but he hoped Mildr
nothing to do with those almanacks. It

have anything to do with them, as they against the law. It was all very well fornd people to read them if they chose, asere not against the law there: but here were liable to be put in prison for them.
n prison!" exclaimed Mildred, forgetting moment her errand. Yes;—Mr. Waugh twenty-five people who had been sent to one magistrate, in one month, for selling legal almanacks.

on't believe Maude has sold one to any-
Mildred thought aloud.

ell; tell her (whoever she is) that she had ot. People should never sell an alma-
they see that it bears a fifteen penny
The Government makes 27,000*l.* by the k-duty; and the Government does not e cheated of the duty. It is but a small rtainly, to punish so many people for ; your friend Maude take care of the law.
; your brother will tell you this is no k; though it may tell him things nearly erful as he could find in any almanack.
e! the people are crying fire!"

I forgot." And Mildred explained what e for. The tract was thrust into Owen's the population of the mill was turned elp; and all Arneside was presently on to farmer Mason's.

FROM the moment that Owen saw the short-hand which his brother and sister had taken to the art of short-hand writing. Mr. W directed him to the clergyman as the most likely to give him information on the subject, and to show him specimens. The clergyman acknowledged that the short-hand he had not the best yet invented; and that perhaps the best yet invented might not be nearly so good as some one not yet devised. This was enough to excite Owen to know, in order to excite him to exertion, the prize. By the help of his friends, he soon got into his possession of three or four kinds, made his choice of what he considered the best, and improved it by some important improvements. He was successful whenever he could find an opportunity to practise. Many were the curious conversations in which he took down for his own amusement, and many the sermons which, to his

about short-hand. Mr. Waugh had accidentally met with it at L——, and had brought it for Owen. When farmer Mason's houses were all burnt to the ground, and no news as to be done for him, Owen came back to the counting-house to study this paper. Mr. could not help being amused at the eagerness with which he devoured the arguments about dots and dashes, as if they had been tidings of war, or of the greatest political event of

This was not the first time that Mr. had had occasion to observe the animation with which scantily-informed persons read what suited their particular tastes and purposes. He had seen a farm-servant, who happened to be able to read, excited for a whole day by some new way of managing a cow, or the method of treating a sheep's fleece; and a weaver drinking in the news of the alteration of a farthing a gross in the wages of his master. He had witnessed the effect of appropriate communications in rousing the mind, in soothing the irritable, by turning the course of their thoughts, and in improving the condition of life, by stimulating the powers of the mind. He had seen none more eager than

" said Owen, " I wonder whether I may know who this X. Y. Z. is?"

I," replied Mr. Waugh, smiling. " I w^t that I found the article lying on the master's counter; and that when I made a

remark upon it. Muggridge told me bring it for you. If you have anything to X. Y. Z., cannot you say it without know he is?"

"I—say anything to this person! If I should like—I am sure, if he knew or that I could tell him—But, sir, do yo think they would put in anything of m sent it?"

"That would much depend on what thought it worth putting in. If you hing to say as good in the eyes of the what X. Y. Z. has said, I suppose the ed be glad to print it: but I hardly think such as this can pay the wrifrs."

"I never thought of being paid, sir. see where this editor is to be found."

It was soon settled that as Ambros have to go to L—— in the course of a fe he might carry a packet from Owen to gridge, the bookseller and stationer, who forward it, at Mr. Waugh's request, to the office in London. How absorbed was from that time, whenever he was not at hi ness in the mill! How silent at meals! careful in making his pens! It would be s fair to tell how many copies he made of hi to X. Y. Z., nor how many beginnings he in and altered. At last, he had to finish in hurry; for the morning was come when Am must proceed to L——, and there w^t no how long it might be before he would again.

ow, Ambrose, you see this package of No.
to go to Keely and Moss's."

ery well," said Ambrose, turning it over,
fix its dimensions and appearance in his
y.

ou can't mistake it, for I have printed the
on instead of writing it, that you may have
culty. See here! 'Keely and Moss.' This
arcel you are to drop by the way, at Mrs.
, near the toll-bar. Then, that other great
e is for Bristow and Son,—you know

And then comes Muggridge's. This,
of all, is for Muggridge; and pray see
uggridge himself, and give into his own
this little brown parcel with Mr. Waugh's
outside. What makes you look so puzzled?
sy enough to carry these to their places, is

I can carry in my head which is which.
e: this big one——"
ead the directions, and you can't mistake.
ould you burden your memory when the
are before your eyes?"

Ambrose showed that he could spell out the
and suggested that, if he should be at a
might ask each person to whom he deli-
package to help him to make out where
t was to go. He would try to be sure to
o mistake about the little parcel and the
Mr. Muggridge, and would not come
without a line of acknowledgment from
important personage himself.

He was so evidently fidgety during his bro-

ther's absence, that his friend Mr. Waugh thought it right to remind him that his fate did not altogether depend on the parcel being safe-delivered. There were so few printed vehicles what such multitudes of people have to say, a very great number must be disappointed if I wish to be heard. He owned that this was hard; he held that printed speech should be free as the words of men's mouths, and as far as it was possible to make it. He had really desired this; and he suffered not a little from arrangements which prevented the possibility of its taking place.

"Because more paper would be wanted, you mean, sir. I fancy, indeed, we might make a fine business of it; if those troublesome men were out of our way. There is no how low you might bring the price of your paper if it were not for them."

"For them, and for the law which gives them their office. The duty in itself, though the part of the grievance, is bad enough,—from one hundred and fifty per cent., and actually lower than the fine paper, used by the few, than on the coarse paper which would be used by the many if it were not for the tax. It is the coarse which pays the hundred and fifty per cent., and the fine that pays the It is bad enough that this duty amounts to more than three times the wages of all the workmen employed in the manufacture."

"Do you really believe that to be the case, sir?"

"It is pretty clearly made out, I fancy."

in a few of 800 paper-mills in the kingdom and about 25,000 individuals employed in the article; and the value of the paper announced is between a million and a million and a half. The duty levied on this is about £.;—a most enormous amount. The f the workpeople can bear no kind of protest to it. How much more paper we should have if this burden was removed, so as to allow, it goes, of freedom of printed speech, one may easily imagine; or, if it is beyond our powers, there is a person in my mill who can tell you all about it. You know the Frenchwoman there. She will tell you how cheaply her countrymen and women can have their say through the press. The direct interference of the government in the liberty of the press is, you know, a different question. Setting this aside, there is a wonderful difference in the facilities provided by the French and English for the diffusion of their knowledge and opinions."

"I suppose others besides their paper-mills are better off than we for being without paper. There must be far more printing to be done than that would occupy, besides the printers, type-founders and ink-makers; and then there are bookbinders and stationers and binders and engravers; then again, more carpenters and millwrights and workmen of every kind employed in the machinery and materials. It must be a great difference between that country and ours where we see a want of books on the one hand and a want of work on the other."

"Ay; your brother Ambrose 'an dozen more, standing by the hour tog fore a placarded wall, for want of s better to read; and scores of rag-so vat-men applying to me for work which be glad to give them if the paper-duty It is really grievous to think how few ployed in the diffusion of knowledge, with the numbers who are occupied to useful purpose. Look here. This is a out upon the best authority. See the p which employments bear to one anot On the one side—*Literature*; on the what ?

Printers	8342	Publicans
Paper-makers	4164	
Bookbinders	3599	
Booksellers	3327	
Stationers, (mostly booksellers)	2797	
Copper-plate Print- ers (including ca- lico)	2663	
Printsellers	593	
		25,485

So, if we exclude the calico-printers, not seem to have much to do with litera have not so many as 25,000 persons em literature, while we have above 61,000 beer. If we add the gin-shops to the what will be the proportion?"

"I find, sir, that in Manchester t 1000 gin-shops, and not so much as o paper."

"It is the fact. And as long as w

liament to uphold such a state of things, they raise an outcry against beer-shops, which shall have a vote of mine. Which that I shall not vote for Mr. Arruther, if could be an election; as I hear there will

I thought that gentlemen who upheld the duty in parliament might spare themselves trouble of canvassing the paper-makers. He said that Mr. Arruther was one who had a dread of the people knowing too much. "I would scarcely speak to you, Owen, if he were trying to get a letter of your own sent. Well: don't set your mind too much about it and I wish you success with all my heart. I should see this letter of yours next week, where we may trust you not to neglect your cause for the sake of becoming a mere scribbler in small publications. I think you will be never to take up your pen but when you have something to say."

I was internally much surprised that Mr. Waugh had encouraged him in his enterprize; for he had a stronger horror than Mr. Waugh of what he called "low publications" in the minds of his work-people. The whole lay in what Mr. Waugh considered to be "low publications." If he had meant low in price, it was hardly likely that he would have given this tract for Owen: but, as few publications then happened to be low in price without being in principle and spirit, Owen's surprise was natural.

One night of the following week, he came home with a bright countenance ; and trembling hand, he laid down before his mother as she sat at work at her table, a pamphlet like the tract she had seen him poring over many evenings. He judged rightly that she could not read, she would like to see where O. E. was printed.

Long did she look at those black marks now, for the first time, nurse Ede learning the letters of the alphabet. From that day, she passed the placarded wall in the village, picking out by her eye all the great O-s in the bills there pasted up. She had no idea that her son's letter must be altered before it was printed. She had heard it very often ; (without understanding much more about it than the first;) but she had now a noble request to proffer,—to hear it again.

"If you are not tired of reading it, my boy ; and then, when you have done, I am not too late for me to put on my bonnet and go and show it to the clergyman. But afraid you will be tired of reading it, my

There never was a more unfounded suspicion. It was not to be denied that Owen had read it very often ; but he did not yet feel self tired. There was no pretence, however, of his mother's going to the clergyman. Owen met him ; and had made bold to stop him, and show him what had happened.

When all the compliments, hearty, if not altogether enlightened, had been paid ; when

ose had relaxed in his stare upon his accomplished brother; and nurse had dried her few tears and resumed her needle, and all reasonable people had been expressed that Mildred would not long in coming home, the happy young writer began to look forward to the next week, when there could or would not be an answer from X. Y. Z. He had already consulted Mr. Waugh on the probability of there being any answer at all, if there was not next week. Mr. Waugh had little doubt there being some reply; Owen's remarks being made in an amicable spirit, and very courteously pressed; and if no reply should be ready by next week, he thought there would at least be promise of one. Owen counted the days as anxiously as in the times of his childhood, when Christmas-day and the fair-day were in prospect. He would have been much ashamed that even his mother should know how glad he was every night to think that another day was gone; and yet, chaps, if the truth had been revealed, his mother was little less childish than himself. The reply appeared, on the earliest possible day; as courteous as Owen's own; not altogether agreeing with him, but modestly asking for further explanation on two or three knotty points.—Who was happier than Owen? His immediate success raised his ambition and his hopes to a height which he had before reached only in imagination. He would write an answer immediately; and when that was done, he would compose a sketch on short-hand, giving an account of his own studies, and the improvements he believed he had

introduced into the art, with all the many ideas which during his studies had gathered round the subject. A stray notion or two about a universal language of written signs had entered his head. He would pursue the idea, and try whether he could not do something which would make him useful out of the limits of his native village, but how was he to find the money to get a book printed? his careful mother asked.—This he believed would be no difficulty: indeed, he hoped would show the a great deal of money by it, he proved something else,—that he had already thought enough on the subject to have made inquiries as to the cost of printing, —had actually seen a printer's bill. He told his mother the paper for such a pamphlet as he meditated would cost 6*l.*, supposing five hundred copies printed. The printing would cost about not more, for he should take care not to have alterations to make after it was once off the press. This would be 20*l.*; and the paper would cost a few shillings more; and then, tising the same, he supposed. Say, two shillings the whole. Then if these five hundred were sold for half-a-crown a-piece, there would be 62*l.* 10*s.* to come in; above 40*l.* paid trouble, and there would be a fine balance over; and he would tell his mother what to do with it. He would—

She promised that she would hear to say on this head when he should

Waugh's assurance that he was likely to gain 40*l.* to divide between himself and the bookseller, by writing a little book. Meantime, she thought it too good a prospect to be a likely one; and could not believe but that everybody would be writing books, if this was the way money might be made by such a lad as her Owen.

Owen thought it a little unreasonable in his mother to doubt him, when he offered her actually a calculation of the expenses he had fully ascertained, and when she had nothing to bring against his figures but an impression of her own. However, he would send his rejoinder to the editor, as before, and think the matter over again before he said anything to Mr. Waugh.

He did so, feeling pretty well satisfied that his second letter, (into which he put some nicely-turned expressions of esteem and admiration for his unknown correspondent) would bring X. Y. Z. and himself to a perfect agreement: and anxious beyond measure for an answer to a query which he proposed in his turn,—a query, upon the reply to which hung he could scarcely say how much that was all-important to the art of short-hand writing. But next week no tract arrived, though it had been positively ordered; and twice over, to prevent mistake. It was so evident that poor Owen was internally fretting and fuming, though outwardly no more than grave, that Mr. Waugh kindly found it necessary to send Ambrose to ——, and even to Mugridge's shop.

"Perhaps, sir," said the young writer, "you could be kind enough to send one line to Mr.

Muggridge ; and then he would write an answer, if there should be any accident, instead of sending a message which Ambrose might mistake, not knowing much about book matters.

Ambrose brought back a written answer,—an answer fatal for the time to Owen's hopes. The tract was not to be had this week, nor at any future time. It was suppressed. The publisher had been informed that if he went on to issue it without putting a fourpenny stamp upon it, he would be prosecuted. The publisher could not afford to sell it, if every copy must cost him fourpence in addition to the other necessary expenses ; and still less could he afford to be prosecuted. The tract was suppressed.

" Well, well ; that is all right enough," observed Mr. Waugh. " The laws must be obeyed, and I am sure I should have been the last person to bring [the publication to Arneside if I had dreamed of its being illegal. I am sorry for you, Owen ; but the laws must be obeyed."

Owen could not bear this ; and he went home the first minute he could. His mother was full of concern, and utterly unable to understand how the case stood. She could not help having some hope that the tract would come down, after all, sooner or later ; and that Owen would surprise her by bringing it in his hand some day.

No : no hope of such an event ! Here was an end of everything. A most useful intercourse between minds which would now become one more strangers was interrupted. The improvement of a useful art was stopped. There was

saying what might not have arisen out of this correspondence,—how much that would have been advantageous to the individuals and to society was now lost through the interference of these Stamp Commissioners. If they had let the publication go on so long, raising hopes and justifying expectations, they might—Owen could not finish what he was saying. He had supposed himself beyond the age of tears; but he now found himself mistaken. He put his hand before his eyes, and wept nearly as heartily as a girl when the spirit of her pet lamb is passing away.

This reverse had the effect of improving Owen's eloquence. He grew very fond of conversing both with the clergyman and with Mr. Waugh on the impolicy and iniquity of restraining the intercourse of minds in society, for the sake of a few taxes, so paltry in their amount as to seem to crave to be drawn from some material or another of bodily food rather than from the intellectual nourishment which is as much the unbounded inheritance of every one that is born into the world as his personal freedom.

All who knew Owen were surprised at the extraordinary improvement he seemed to have made within a short time, in countenance and manner, as much as in his conversation. It became a common remark among the neighbours, that there must be a proud feeling in nurse Ede's mind whenever she saw her manly and intelligent-looking son passing through the village, with a gait and a glance so unlike those of his former school-companions, who seemed to have

.....
said that it was bad enough to tax the light
visits the eyes, but infinitely worse to tax
light that should illumine the immortal
and the paper-makers quoted him over their
saying that no taxation is so injurious as to
the raw material ; and that books are the
material of science and art. For Owen's
all were glad, for that of the village all
sorry, when it was made known that Mr. V-----
had resolved to part with his young friend
order to give him opportunity for further
provement and advancement than could be
his reach at Arneside, and had procured
good situation in Mr. Muggridge's establish-
at L——.

Nurse spoke not a word in the way of
tion. Such an idea as her boy's leavin
native village had never occurred to her
she bore the surprise and consequent sepa-

CHAPTER VI.

PRESS AND POST-OFFICE.

OWEN promised, on leaving Arneside, not to forget the old place and his old friends ; and though he soon became a prosperous man, he lost none of his interest in those who were proud of being regarded by him. Reports arrived of the importance of the young Arneside scholar in L—— ; in that large and busy town, which was like London to the imaginations of the villagers. Owen was Secretary to the Mechanics' Institute there, in course of time, after having won two or three prizes, and introduced the study and practice of his favourite short-hand. A straggler from Arneside had met him in the streets of L—— ; had been with him when he was stopped by three people within a hundred yards, all eager to ask him something about the newspaper,—the Western Star ; and had finally watched him into the hotel when, well dressed in black, he had passed in with several gentlemen who were attending a public dinner there. Owen must have grown into something very like a gentleman to be attending a public dinner, and to be consulted three times within a hundred yards about a newspaper. One of Owen's tokens of remembrance was this weekly newspaper, a copy of which he sent down regularly to the landlord of the Rose, Mr. Chowne, to be circulated through the village.

when it had been read in the tap-room. was considered a very handsome present; indeed, some of his careful friends, rememb that sevenpence-halfpenny a week is 1*l.* 12 a year, consulted together about sending word that he was too generous, and that were scrupulous about accepting so expens remembrance from him. His mother, how heard of this, and put an end to all scrup expressing her confidence that her son wou nothing which he could not properly afford it afterwards transpired from some quarter Owen had told somebody that this news cost him nothing, an intimation which cert the village politicians interpreted as me that he wrote the whole of it. From the me that their version of the story was adopte eagerness with which the "Western Star" received was redoubled; and those who not read listened with open mouths while who could told the news, and magnified as went along. The gossip about the Turkish tan and his Ministers now became interestir well as the speculations about the magnetic and there was no end to the astonishmei Owen's learning, which seemed to extend courts and cabinets down to razor-strops Macassar oil. No day of the week passed out his being pronounced a wonderful y man.

The most incomprehensible thing to the v village was that Owen sent down warning his letters, more than once, that the "W

"Star" must not be trusted as if it told nothing but truth. Its reports were declared to be often unfair, and its politics wavering and unprincipled. There was some talk in L—— of trying to get up another newspaper; and it would be a pity if (as was too likely) it could not be done; as an opposition might improve the "Western Star." This declaration seemed to exhibit an unparalleled modesty and disinterestedness on the part of Owen. Nobody would have found out that his newspaper was not perfectly fair, if he had not himself said so.

One motive to such transcendent virtue might be discerned. The reports which, Owen said, were the least of all to be trusted, were those of Mr. Arruther's speeches and conduct in the House. Owen was known to be no admirer of Mr. Arruther as a Member of Parliament; and, that the "Western Star" had always praised this gentleman, and called upon his constituents for gratitude, was supposed to be owing to the laws of good breeding, which might forbid any public blame of so rich and grand a person as Mr. Arruther. But Owen's private letters spoke very plainly of the Member; of his idleness about his duty; of his prejudice in favour of the aristocracy; and of his constancy in opposing every measure which could tend to the relief and enlightenment of the working classes. He wished that he could give his old friends the means of knowing what grounds he had for saying all this; but the London papers took little notice of Mr. Arruther, and nothing would be found

represented.

On the days when the "Western Star" : man after man dropped in at the tap-roon Rose, to try for his turn, or to listen to a who might be reading aloud. Nurse never be persuaded to go and listen too, a seat of honour would have been awarded by the window in summer, and near the winter. She felt that she had rather wait a rule was made that she should have the loan of the paper. Such was the rule, if but been kept. But when she had her turn, it did not always happen that Ambrose ready to read, or that she was at home that day; and she never chose to detain the paper beyond a single day, when so many better lars than herself were longing for it. An was some underhand work about this. The newspaper had sometimes disappeared from the table at the Rose; which happened 1

Star." Yet, the first thing that she remembered on waking, every Saturday morning, was that this was the day of the arrival of the newspaper; and Ambrose was sure to be reminded of it by some gentle hint during breakfast.

He went in at the Rose, one Saturday evening, to see what was doing. There sat Farmer Mason, looking more shabby than ever; as he had done each time that Ambrose had seen him since the fire. He came to learn if the advertisement and list of subscriptions in his favour were in the "Star" to-day. Nothing like them appeared; and he was drowning his disappointment in a third glass of spirit and water. Some Job's comforters were present who asked him how he could expect that his friends should consume the little money they had obtained for him in advertising; and added what they had heard about the unwillingness of many people to assist a man who had shown himself so imprudent as not to insure. Mason did not boast of any more patience than Job.

"As for the insuring," said he, "it is all very well for the rich to talk. They insure themselves; having several properties which they make to secure one another; it being the last thing likely that all or many should be burnt down. But the very cause which prevents their insuring should teach them to excuse us poor men for not doing it."

"Besides," observed the landlord, "there are so many country people that do not think of insuring against fire! Indeed, I scarcely know a

farmer that has done it; and why should I act differently from his neighbours?"

"And why don't the farmers insure? does not every body insure?" cried I. "Because of the tax which the rich escaping by making one estate insure another long as the government is to have 200 per cent upon fire insurances, there will be plenty of people to keep me in countenance for what few are pleased to call my neglect."

"What business has the government to interfere with a man, when he is trying to provide against misfortune?" asked the shoemaker of the village. "It is a direct reward to carelessness to tax carelessness. And 200 per cent

"Yes: 200 per cent. If the premium is calculated at 1s. 6d., the government impose a stamp. If you go and insure 1000*l.* worth of goods at 1*lb.*s., we'll say, you must pay a stamp of 30*s.* to government. Where is the wonder that a man would rather trust to Providence than to the fire from his roof than submit to such a tax? The true matter of wonder is, that any government could ever shut its eyes to this!"

"Something has happened about sea-policies which might have opened their eyes," said the master of the ship from the next port, "observed the last time he was here, he told me he had no idea of before. While we have more and more ships passing in and out, the demand for sea-policies is falling off. Where the amount transacted has increased one-fifth, the demand

fallen off two-fifths: that is to say, our merchants and ship-masters go and insure in Holland, and in Germany, and in the United States of America, or any respectable place where the stamp is not so high as in England. The government might as well take off this tax at once, with a good grace; for, in a little while, all the insurers will be driven across the water. Since the duty will soon yield nothing at all, they may as well let us keep a useful branch of business among us, instead of giving it away to foreigners."

"I am sure," said poor Mason, sipping from his glass, and recurring to the faults which had been found with him,—"I am sure it is no unreasonable thing of me to look for another advertisement or two, considering how little can be done by one. Only think how many people may chance to miss seeing the paper that once, or may overlook that particular advertisement, when they might be ready enough to give, if it did but come often enough before their eyes. And I suppose it cannot cost a great deal to print ten or twelve lines; and when once it stands ready for printing, I suppose they charge less each time, as is done in other cases where there is less charged in proportion to the greatness of the custom."

The landlord knew that this was the way in America. His brother was in the habit of advertising the departure of his ship from an American port. He paid for his advertisement (which happened to be a short one) 2s. 2d. for one insertion; 3s. 3d. for two; and only 6½d. more

~~ADVERTISEMENTS ARE EXPENSIVE THE OWNERSHIP OF~~
first in England; and, bad as the duty is altogether, this is the worst part of it; Mr. Mason was saying, repetition is all in advertising.

"There is talk of taking off a good part of the advertisement duty," * observed the shoe-

"There will be less use in taking off than the government expects," replied the lord, "for the very reason that the principle of an advertisement duty interferes with the fixing of the price on repetition. If the government now make, as they say, 160,000L by this tax, they would find their profit in it off altogether by—"

"The increase of the paper duty, from the multitude of advertisements there would be

"That would be true; but I would have the paper duty off too; and so I should look for another quarter for the compensation. Much

"One might easily find out," observed somebody, "whether the Americans advertise more than we do, from having no duty to pay. That would be the test."

"The only test; and what is the fact? There are half as many again of advertisements in the daily papers of New York alone, as in all the newspapers of Great Britain and Ireland."

"Without London. You leave out the great London papers."

"Not I. I include the great daily papers of London. We have twice as many people as the United States, and more than twice as much business; yet we have only one million of advertisements in a year, and the United States have ten millions—that is to say, their advertising is to ours as ten to one. And when you further consider, as my brother says, how many of the Americans are busy on the land instead of in trade, and how many more we have occupied in trade, from which the greater part of advertisements come, it is hardly too much to say that their advertising is to ours as forty to one. Depend upon it, we are under the mark when we say that the duty suppresses nineteen out of twenty of those advertisements which would be sent to the newspapers if we had the same freedom as the Americans; and that no mere reduction will prevent the suppression of millions which it is for everybody's advantage should appear."

"Yes, indeed; and why we should be compelled to pay to the Government for making known that we have something to sell ten miles

off, when a shopkeeper may freely put a bill in his window to tell what may be had within, it is not altogether easy to see."

"There is one thing easy to see," observed Joy, the builder; "and that is the figure that people make of our walls, sticking them all over with bills. I have more trouble than enough with pulling them down from the end of my master's house; and as sure as I next pass the way, I find it all covered over again with red and black letters, and ugly pictures. My master calls it making a newspaper of his gable. And as for the chalking,—it is said that men and boys are hired to go about chalking all the walls in the country; and before ever our mortar is dry there is some unsightly scrawl or another on the new red bricks. 'Tis too much for the temper of any builder. For my part, I make no scruple of threshing any one that I catch with the chalk in his hand, man or boy."

Ambrose stood up for the practice of plastering the walls with bills; he having been often amused, and even led to read, by a tempting display of this kind. But it did not take long to convince him that he might be better amused and more comfortably advanced in his reading if he could but be supplied at his own home with a sufficiency of pictures and articles to study. He saw that it was pleasanter to sit down at his mother's deal-table for such purposes, than to stand in a broiling sun or drizzling rain, looking up till the back of his neck ached like that of a rheumatic old man.

Mason was at first equally disposed to advocate the chalking. He had himself sent his poor boys about to represent on every conspicuous rick surface within five miles, a large house in Ames, with the inscription underneath, "Remember Farmer Mason and his large young family, burnt out of house and home." He believed that he owed nearly as much to this as to having employed Grice the crier to bawl his case through two or three parishes.

The shoemaker hoped that fellow Grice did not take anything from Farmer Mason for doing him this service. Grice was known to be prospering in the world; and it was a cruel thing to take money from a ruined man, the same as from a fortunate one. Mason sighed, shook his head, and applied himself to his glass. Perhaps the landlord winced under the last remark, conscious of being now actually running up a score against Mason for drink, which he would never have thought of tasting if he had not been tempted by the Rose, for the sake of seeing the advertisement of his calamity. To have defended Grice could have been going rather too far; but howe ventured to show that Grice was no worse than some other people.

The Government, he said, took large sums of money from all distressed people whose calamities were advertised. When there was a famine in Ireland, several thousand pounds of the money subscribed for the relief of the famishing went to the Government in the shape of advertisement-money; and when the floods of the last autumn

had laid waste whole districts in Scotland profit which the Treasury made by the announcement would have rebuilt hundreds of the tages which were swept away. And this p king was not only on rare and great occasions. There was not a poor servant out of place had not to pay to the Government for the ch of getting a service ; and to pay exactly the as the nobleman who wishes to sell an estat ten thousand a-year, and to whom a pound in advertisement-duty is of less consequence a doit would be to the servant out of place.

Mason sighed, and said that the thing plain to him was that he was destined to be stripped of all he had, since there was a plague every hand,—first the fire, and then Grice the Government, and everybody. But then he was disappointed in what he came to see in the newspaper, he did not mean to go away out seeing it ; and so he would trouble the landlord for another glass of spirit and water. It would be hard if he did not see the paper as he had no money to pay the pot-boy, like other people, for a sight of it. He did wonder, however, he was not the only one that wondered, why the landlord chose to make a profit of what sent him as a present,—taking one little article from one, and another from another nobody. Supposed the pot-boy put in his pocket all the good things he got every week.

Chowne wondered what his friend Mason meant. If people chose to make presents to servants, it was nothing to him : but,—as for

making anything by the paper,—he could tell the present company, if they did not know it already, that there was a law against letting newspapers. He should now take care to tell his pot-boy the very words of the law,—“that any hawker of newspapers, who shall let any newspaper to hire to any person, or to different persons, shall forfeit the sum of five pounds for each offence.” If, after this, the lad should choose to run the risk, it would be at his own peril ; and nobody would now suppose that a prudent man like himself would run the risk of being fined five pounds, a dozen times over, every week.

O, but that must be an old, forgotten law, that nobody thought of regarding. Were there no newsmen in London, letting out newspapers at twopence an hour ?

The law was not so very old, Chowne said. Our good King George the Third had been reigning just thirty years when it was passed. If it was disregarded in London, he supposed people had their reasons for disregarding it ; and he was far from wishing to defend that bit of law ; but, for his own sake, he should not break it. So, perhaps, friend Hartley, who had been getting the paper by heart, apparently, while the others were talking, would have the goodness either to read aloud, or to hand the sheet over to somebody who would.

The reader had been anxious to see what was said about Arruther's being absent during two nights,—the most important of any in the session to some of his constituents,—and voting with the majority

Hartley had no idea of being gulled as they would gull him, just for the sake of white Mr. Arruther ; and he began to read what the paper said. A good deal of argumentation followed, which, however animating and what it might be to the persons engaged, was useless to Ambrose, from his knowing about the subject discussed. Seeing no one of the party arriving at the accident and parts in any decent time, he determined to go home and tell his mother that they must leave and that he did not know whether the party were entertaining or not, this time. All were still leaning over the table and listening, to take notice of him when he went away ; and never drank anything, Chowne did not even himself called upon to bestow more than a nod on Ambrose, as the lad made his rush in passing out.

Whom should he meet at the next corner ? Ryan ? Ambrose's wits were certainly sharpened by some means or another : for he ha

Ambrose blurted out the story of the fire, the subscription, the rapacity of the Government in regard to advertisements, and the advantage it would be to Mason if the rag-merchant would take up his cause, and beg for him through the country.

"Ay; that's the way," said Ryan. "Always something for me to do as I travel the country! However, I'll do it with all my heart. My errands are not all begging ones, as I will show you. I give as well as beg sometimes. Here, take this. This is Owen's tract (I mean the tract that was put down) come to life again. I'll give it to you this once; and if you can get anybody to join you in buying it at twopence a-week by the time I come again, I can order it for you. Not that you can have it weekly; the carriage would cost too much; but—"

"It can come by post, can't it? The 'Western Star' always comes by post, and no charge."

"Very likely; but this is not altogether like the 'Western Star' or other newspapers that come by post, as you will find when you look at it. But you can have four numbers together, once a-month, when the monthly things come for the clergyman and Mr. Waugh. Give my love to nurse, and tell her rags are down. She must take a penny a pound less if she has any to sell. The rags from the Mediterranean and the east are not all wanted, and the American paper-makers have come here to buy; and while that is the case, mine will be but a bad business. Our paper-making is a joke to theirs; and, for

my part, if something does not happen soon to quicken the demand for rags, I think I shall give up going my rounds, and bid you all good bye."

"No : don't say that, Mr. Ryan. We should be sorry not to see you twice a-year, as we have done as long as I can remember."

"Well ; if you wish to help my trade, and so go on seeing me, do your best to spread this publication. If you will believe me, there are ten thousand a-week circulating of it already ; and that requires a good deal of paper,—see !"

Ambrose was approaching, as slowly as he could put one foot before the other, the fifth time that his mother looked out for him from her door.

"So, here you are, my dear ; and the paper, too !—and a picture at top of it to-day ! That's something new. I wonder whether it be Owen's drawing. He could draw if he was to try, I'm sure."

"'Tis not Owen's paper, mother ; but a much finer one, and not costing scarcely a quarter as much as Owen's."

And he told how he had got it ; and helped his mother to make out the pictures, as she looked at them over his shoulder.

"Who is that lady, I wonder now," said nurse, "with her hands fastened, poor thing ! and a great arm out of a cloud whipping her ? What fine feathers she has in her queer hat ! and what a whip ! with a man's face at the end of every cord."

"That is Britannia and her task-masters, mother. Those are her task-masters,—those faces

in the whip ; and they are our rulers : there are their names. And below there is—‘ Many a tear of blood has Britain shed under those tyrants that make themselves a cat-o'-nine-tails, to bare the bones and harrow the feelings of the sons of industry.’ How cruel !—Then there is —here, in this corner—”

“ A great chest all on fire. I see.”

“ A printing-press, that is ; but what the great light round about it means, I don’t know ; but it does not seem to be burning away. Then, opposite, there is a black person, with an odd foot and a long tail ; and see what is flying off from the end of his tail !”

“ A crown, I do believe ; and what is the other ?”

“ A mitre. The lines below are—

‘ My tail shall toss both Church and State,
And leave them, shortly, to their fate.’

And do look behind ! There is the church window, and two men hanging. I think the fat one is the parson. Who can the other be ?”

“ But, my dear, I do not like this picture at all. It seems to me very cruel and wicked.”

“ Well, let us look at the next. Here is a man that has tumbled into the kennel ; and a woman with a child in her arms falling over him ; and nobody helps them up ; but all the boys in the street are pointing at them. What is written over behind there ? ‘ Gin palace.’ Ah ! those people are drunk, poor creatures !”

“ My dear, don’t say ‘ poor creatures !’ for fear

I should think you pity them. They desire that may happen to them ; and I hope they say so."

The paper said something very like told the story of a man who had beat his wife, and turned her out of a gin-shop which he had followed him there, with her infant arms. In his drunken rage, he had pushed her through a door so violently as to squeeze the infant through the door-way, and cause its death. This was very plainly, and followed by some forcible marks on the disgusting sin of drunk. Mrs. Ede was much pleased with all this, and with more which Ambrose read when she lighted her candle, and sat down to dress her stockings. There was a story of a master who was kind enough to offer to make another master of a run-away apprentice ; and the rebuking words of a magistrate gave to a mean-spirited wretch who would have frightened his little daughter into telling a lie to save him from justice. There was a short account of what was doing at the North Pole ; and afterwards, directions how to keep meat from spoiling in hot weather. In the course of this, Ambrose stopped, quite tired out. He came to "wiped with a dry cloth," his eyes failed him, and the lines swam before his eyes. He had never before read so much in one sitting. Nurse was sorry not to hear what should be done next with the meat ; but she hoped Ambrose would be able to go on to-morrow. Meanwhile she spent a few minutes in glancing over the paper, which was to her an expanse of hieroglyphics.

" Ah ! here is a song !" cried she. " This is the way the song was printed in Owen's paper.—Never mind, my dear. You have done quite enough. Never mind the song now."

Ambrose could not help trying, and for some time in vain, to make out this bit of apparent poetry. It turned out at last to be a list of country agents and their abodes : a list so long as to fill a quarter of a column.—When the laugh at this mistake was done, nurse began to tell her son what a very happy mother she considered herself. It was a pity, to be sure, that poor Mildred did not get home in time to hear all that her mother had heard ; and, indeed, nurse sometimes wondered whether her girl did not stay out later than she need ; and whether it was a fancy of her own that Mildred was not so fond of being at home as she used to be. But still, everybody knew Mildred to be a very steady, virtuous girl, unlike two or three at the mill who might be mentioned ; and, while many mothers were anxious about their lads, not knowing whether they passed their evenings at the public-house, or playing thimble-rig in the lane, or going into the woods after dark with a gun, nurse was wholly at ease about her boys. Owen was doing honourably, which partly made up for his being at a distance ; and here was Ambrose improving his learning by finding out for her how meat should be kept in hot weather, and meeting with awful lessons about drunkenness. It made her feel so obliged to him ! and she knew he had a pleasure in delighting her : a sort of pleasure that poor Mrs.

Arruther and her son seemed never to have together, for all his fine education. And were many much humbler people than the others who were not near so happy as nurse she could but make out whether anything lay on her girl's mind—But the presen not a time to speak of the only great troub had. It would be ungrateful to do so to-nig There was one more thing she should li know, however; and that was why, when paper blamed violence and falsehood in men got drunk, and in bad fathers, it was itself so lent about our rulers, and told so much tha thought must be false about them. She ha wish to find fault with anything that Ryan brought; but she had rather think the paper taken than believe that our rulers were so as it declared.

Ambrose looked again at the pictures; the people who wrote the paper must be j sure what they were about before they pi such things; feared that the rulers and the ci must be a bad set; and reminded his mother virtuous this publication had proved itself gin.

If nurse had known all, she would not felt the surprise she had ventured to exp and if Ambrose had known all, he would have concluded that because some vices condemned and some virtues honoured in page, the next must be pure in the morals politics. This newspaper was an unstamped therefore an illegal, publication. It wa

noxious to the law, and therefore an enemy to the law, and to all law-makers. Moral in its choice and presentation of police reports, and of late occurrences of other kinds, judicious in its selections from good books, and useful in those of its original articles which had nothing to do with politics, it was cruel, malicious, and false in its manner of treating whatever related to law-makers. It was what in high places is called inflammatory. Its tendency was, not to enlighten its readers about the faults of their representatives, errors in the practice of government, and the evils arising from former faults and errors; but to persuade the people that rich men must be wicked men; that the industrious must be oppressed; and that the way to remedy every thing was to strip the rich and hang the idle. Its object, in short, was to make its readers hate an authority which it chose to disobey.—If no injurious authority had interfered with the establishment of this paper, (which establishment it had not availed to prevent,) the political part of this paper would have been as moral as the rest. There is no abstract and peculiar hatred in men's minds against rulers, any more than there is against poets, or jewellers, or colonels in the army, or any other class; and no one class would have been selected for reprobation here, if there had been no provocation, on the one side, to defiance on the other. If there had been no fear of punishment for saying anything at all, there would have been no temptation to say what was unjust and cruel, to the injury of every party

concerned. But, for the sake of the four stamp, a temperate and very useful publ had been put down ; and there had arisen its ruins,—another, not like itself, but se high with whatever could most exalt the pa and thereby enlist the prejudices of the mu in its support against the law. This cou taken place only under an unwise and opp law ; unwise in affording facilities for its o sion ; and oppressive in debarring the from an immeasurable advantage, for the a very small supposed profit to the treasur

As Ambrose unfolded the paper, on being tied with what he had seen of two sides of or three little papers fell out, and fluttered to the ground. They contained a puff paper, and were to be circulated by hi doubt.

“*The best and cheapest Newspaper ever pu in England.*

“THE TWOPENNY TREAT, AND PEOPLE’S BOOK.

“ It shall abound in Police intelligence, Murders, Rapes, Suicides, Burnings, Mass Theatricals, Races, Pugilism, and all manner ‘moving accidents by flood and field.’ In it will be stuffed with every sort of devilment will make it sell. For this reason, and to fit the poor man’s treat, the price is only one pence (not much more than the price of paper.) So that even to pay its way, the must be enormous. With this, however, w

be satisfied. Our object is, not to make money, but to beat the Government. Let the public only assist us in this, and we promise them the cheapest and best paper for the money that was ever published in England.

OBSERVE !	s.	d.
Advertisements under six lines . . .	1	6
Each additional line	0	2
Published by E. Hamilton ; and sold by all courageous Venders of the unstamped."		

Why did not Ambrose read this announcement to his mother ? Why did he not, the next day, give her some of the benefit of the other two pages of this paper ? If nurse had been able to read for herself about the "devilment" with which the publication was to be stuffed, and about the nature of the contract between masters and workmen, she might, by a few words of parental wisdom and love, have saved her son and herself from future intolerable misery. One grief lay heavy at her heart already ; a grief which had its cause in the gross ignorance of one of her children. Another was in store, arising from the imperfect knowledge and mistaken credulity of her second son. In the enlightenment of the eldest lay her only security for her maternal peace.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POLICY OF M.P.s.

OWEN's visions had not all been realized, had not yet got his thirty or forty pound publishing what he had to say on short-hand universal language. He had not even publ at all. This arose, first, from certain diffic represented to him by Mr. Muggridge, and confirmed by a London bookseller ; and, from his having grown modest as he grew lightened. He was much less confident at I than he had been at Arneside, that he could anything very new and very valuable on a versal language.

The bookseller's first difficulty was : Owen's remarks being published as a pamphlet. He was right enough in saying that the man did not know what he was about in wi to publish a pamphlet. In order to intimat risk, Mr. Muggridge told him that not one phlet in fifty pays the cost of its publication showed him how clearly impossible it was any other result could take place. Pamphlets were triple taxed ; and by what means cou small an article pay its expense of produc three kinds of tax, and the trouble of the publ and leave any surplus for the author ? Firs paper was heavily excised ; then there wa pamphlet duty of three shillings per sheet then the advertisement duty. And the ri

selling the whole must not be forgotten. A duty must be paid upon every copy of the first edition, before a single one was sold; if no more than twenty were purchased, and the rest went as waste paper to the tobacconist, there would be no drawback allowed: not even be given to see whether there would be any or not. There were no bonded warehouses, where books might be lodged between their manufacture and their sale. To issue a pamphlet must be a speculation of unavoidable hazard—To all but the Government, who makes sure the taxes beforehand.

To all but the Government! And what did Government get by it? The practice tended to the suppression of pamphlets, and not to the fit of the treasury. The very oppressive pamphlet duty yielded to the Government 970*l.* a year. For this mighty sum were hundreds of diligent men kept silent who might have uttered thousands of opinions and millions of facts which could have been useful to their race, but who had neither power nor inclination to issue inexpensive volumes thoughts which would have been worth setting forth in cheap tracts. For this mighty sum were thousands of rational beings subjected to that restriction of commerce which the most to be deprecated, and the least capable defence,—the commerce of thought. What could be said to regulations of commerce which would practically prohibit a silver coinage, while allowed but a very minute supply of copper? What would be thought of the injury to those

who had it not in their power to deal with gold? Yet in the far more important interchange of knowledge and opinion, this monstrous virtual prohibition subsisted for the sake of the 97*l.* a-year which it brought to the treasury!

Owen could scarcely believe that the produce of the tax could be so small till it was explained what its attendant expenses were. Fifty prosecutions in the year cannot be conducted for nothing; and the average of prosecutions in a year for the neglect of payment of the pamphlet duty was fifty. In some years, the average of prosecutions had been so much larger, or the horror of the tax had so availed in deterring from that mode of publication, that the Government had sustained an actual loss of 200*l.* under that head of duty. If Owen meant to publish at all, he had better swell his matter into a good thick volume—a ten shilling octavo, which would escape the pamphlet duty, and cost no more in advertising than an eighteen-penny pamphlet.

And what chance was there of his making it worth his while to publish a book? Owen would know. Little chance enough of his being compensated for his toil, and rewarded for his talent, though he might perhaps recover the money he must lay out. If he printed five hundred copies, the expenses would be about 170*l.*, of which 30*l.* would be tax of one kind or another. Thus eleven copies must be given to various institutions—

But Owen did not mean to give any away except two or three copies to old friends.

He must. There was a law by which eleven copies of every work entered at Stationers' Hall must be presented to institutions where they are as sure to lie unread as if they were already the waste paper they will be some time or other. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are among the eleven favoured places: those rich Universities, which are exempted from that paper-duty which must be paid by every little tradesman who issues a hand-bill about his stock, and every labourer who buys his daughter a Bible when she goes out to service, or puts half a quire of foolscap into her hand that she may write sometimes to her parents. Well; these expenses being all paid, there would remain to be divided between the author and the publisher, when every copy was sold, neither more nor less than 20*l.* That is to say, the treasury would take 35*l.*, and the author and publisher together 20*l.*, and this in the best possible case,—that of every copy being sold.

This statement disposed Owen to refrain from becoming an author at present,—at least till he had asked an experienced London publisher whether Mr. Muggridge did not labour under some mistake. The answer from London was that Mr. Muggridge's statement was perfectly correct; and added that, in this country, not one-fourth of the books published pay their expenses, leaving out of view all recompense of the author's ability and industry; that only one in eight or ten can be reprinted with advantage; and that, *in the case of the most successful works,—works*

pushing it. He became the principle for the "Western Star."

Now a power came into his hands nature and extent he had not formed conception before he made trial of his nation. Upon him it now depended how good people of L—— and a wide district should know of the law proceedings, of meetings and dinner speechifyings in place in the town and neighbourhood. Owen it depended whether the misdemeanors of certain citizens should be held up as a disgrace or obligingly concealed; whether the cause should be allowed to take its own way or subjected to be watched by the townspeople; whether one side or both of a political question should be presented. There was no competitor as the "Western Star" was the only newspaper in the place; and nothing could be easier than it now would have been to Owen to infl

their best sayings put at length, and to the best advantage. As it was impossible to issue the whole of what every body said, the most natural process seemed to be to print what Owen liked most, and must therefore think the most worth carrying away. Owen himself felt that this was an unreasonable and pernicious power to be in the hands of any man; and, earnestly as he desired not to abuse it, he was so well aware that every man must have his peculiar tastes and political partialities,—he saw so clearly that no one report of his in the “Western Star” was in matter precisely what it would have been if prepared by any one else, that it offended his judgment and his conscience to be left in a state of irresponsibility in the discharge of a duty of such extreme importance. He felt that responsibility to any one mind was out of the question. If Mr. Muggridge, or any other censor, had been set over him, the only difference would have been that the public would have seen affairs through Mr. Muggridge’s medium, instead of through Owen’s: but there was another kind of responsibility to which he would fain have been subjected; and that was, public opinion. If he had known that other papers beside the “Western Star” would also publish the proceedings he was reporting, he must not only have avoided any gross act of suppression or embellishment, but must have vied with other reporters in selecting whatever was most weighty, by whomsoever said, and on whatever aspect of a question. In *free competition alone*, he saw, lay his security

for his own perfect honesty, and that of the public for being truly informed about public proceedings.

Owen was now in a somewhat similar position to that of the reporters of the London newspapers, some years ago, when a very few journals, compromising matters among themselves, and, secure from competition, sported with public curiosity as they chose. If a fit of yawning seized those gentlemen in the midst of a parliamentary debate, they went to the next tavern to refresh themselves with a bowl of punch; and Burke and Fox might take their chance for its being known beyond the House that they had spoken at all. Thus, if Owen grew tired, he had only to go away, and add next morning that "the meeting separated at a late hour, highly gratified," &c. &c. Again, the old London reporters did not like having to work three nights together, and gave themselves a holiday on Wednesdays. In like manner, Friday being a busy day with Owen, he might have skipped over all Friday doings, and have allowed a dead silence to rest on whatever happened on that unlucky day. He had been rather roughly treated by one of the opulent friends of the Mechanics' Institution; and, if he had not been too honest, he might have omitted a hundred notices which he printed of this gentleman's zealous exertions for the good of the town; or have made nonsense of the sentiments he uttered, or have taken care that his name should not remain upon record in the local history of wind.

reporters are the faithful or unfaithful compilers. This is the way that Mr. Windham's light was hid under a bushel for a whole session, when he was most conscious of his own brilliancy, and most eager to illumine the public. He had offended the reporters; and to punish him, the people of Great Britain were kept in the dark.

Besides the temptation which he had in common with them,—that of suppressing through pique and prejudice,—Owen was subjected to another. Again and again was he insulted by the offer of a bribe, or by an attempt at intimidation. One day, when he had been reporting in court, Mr. Arruther crossed over to him, and with a dubious manner, between shyness and condescension, asked him to drop in and take a glass of wine with him at his inn, that evening, as he had something to say to him.

Owen had never used any disguise as to his opinions of Mr. Arruther's parliamentary conduct; and he therefore believed that if the gentleman bestowed any thoughts on him at all, they could scarcely be very affectionate ones. He was surprised, of course, at finding himself received with as much cordiality as a person of little sensibility could throw into his manner. The wine on the table was excellent; the invitations to partake of it hearty; and the object of the invitation presently disclosed.

Mr. Arruther could not conceive why Owen troubled himself to report all the law proceedings that took place in the court. Many of them could interest none but the parties concerned.

What had the public to do, for instance, with his cousin Ellen's quarrels with him, or with his mother's property? Where was the printing of law-suits,—dull things to read, and tiresome to manage? Owen explained his business was to report. It was the duty of the paper to tell the readers of the paper what they were interested in, and what they chose to consider important. He understood from his employer that the part of the paper was more narrow than the law reports; and this was not as it was by means of these law reports, but that a great number of persons could get information respecting the laws under which they were subject. If he were obliged to give the representations made to him a place in the paper, there would be nothing left out of the paper, there would be nothing left in it: for there were few persons of intelligence that it was not the wish of some person or another to conceal: but, if he chose what particular department to omit, it should certainly be almost as good as the law-reports. Other kinds of news had some chance of travelling by some different means; but the newspapers were almost the only guides of the subjects of the day as to their duty to the State. He knew that Arruther was of opinion that the law had nothing to do with the laws but to make them known to the people, but that the people could not well obey the laws without knowing what they were: so that Arruther, who wished the laws to be obeyed, did not grudge the people the little they could learn of them through the newspapers.

"Then, pray," said the gentleman, "do not cut short that cause about Thirlaway's road, that kept us all waiting such a confounded time this morning. Give it all; let them have every line of it; and if you find it likely to fill your paper, you can leave out my affairs, to make room for it."

"I hope to be able to manage both, sir. The leading arguments on each side of all the causes tried this morning can be offered without transgressing our limits."

"Better print the other entire. Do you know, Mr. Owen, I will give you a shilling a line to see how complete a thing you can make of it, provided you leave out mine to make room."

"You do not know the person you have to deal with, Mr. Arruther. A man cannot be a reporter for a twelvemonth without knowing something of the practice of 'feeing the fourth estate,' as people say. I am upon my guard, sir, I assure you; and the less you say on this head the better, for your own sake."

"On your guard! Bless me! What an expression,—as if I had said anything wrong! Do you suppose I do not know the customs of your craft? Till the management of a newspaper becomes a less expensive affair than it is at present, I do not know what better plan there can be than making out the pay of reporters for what they bring to the compositor, by letting them take fees for what they suppress. Such a custom is so convenient to all parties, that I wonder at your pretending to dislike it."

"When you call it convenient to all parties, sir, you seem to forget the principal party concerned. However it may be with the proprietor of the paper, and with the reporter, and those who tender the fee, it is not very convenient to the public that their supply of information should depend on the length of a few purses, whose owners may wish to make private certain of their proceedings which ought to be public. It may prove convenient to some of your constituents, sir, if not to you, that it should be known exactly how you stand in that cause which was tried this morning. It is always convenient to electors to know as much as they can learn of the character of their representatives. I believe that I have no right to keep back such information; and the report will therefore appear to-morrow, at the same length as is generally allotted to causes of that nature."

Mr. Arruther explained in vain how particularly provoking his mother's will had been; how unexpected it was that his cousin Ellen should have been stirred up to sue him; how little idea he had till this morning of the extent to which his lawyer had deceived him about the merits of his own case; how glad he should be if the whole could now be dropped and privately arranged; and, finally and especially, how little the public had to do with whether he tried to keep his mother's property, or quietly let it go to somebody else. It was in vain that he urged all this. Owen could not see why any of these considerations should interfere with the advantage which

the readers of the paper would derive from the knowledge of Mr. Arruther's proceedings. That this gentleman had a bad cause to maintain might be a very sufficient reason for his present condescension, and for his offering to double and treble his bribe ; but it afforded the strongest possible inducement to Owen to publish the whole, for the guidance of those who had it in their power to withdraw this unworthy man from public life. Mr. Arruther grew angry when all the offers he could make for the suppression of the report were simply declined.

" I do not know, sir, what has made you my enemy," he observed. " But you are my enemy, sir. Don't deny it. Do you think I am not aware of what you have done, first in trying to deprive me of the support of the editor of the ' Western Star ; ' and, when you could not succeed in that, in exposing me privately wherever you could ? "

" How do you use the word ' privately,' Mr. Arruther ? If you mean that I have whispered things to your disadvantage, or used any kind of secrecy in what I have said, you are mistaken. If you mean that I have printed nothing against you, you are quite correct ; but the reason is, that I have not had the power. If there had been any independent newspaper in the district, where I might have said what you allude to, it would have saved me the trouble of writing many letters, and have enabled me to do my duty much more effectually than it has been done. If you feel yourself aggrieved from the same cause ; if you desire an opportunity of publicly contradict-

stances of the time will allow."

"Not I. We have too many now already. I shall not countenance the set of any more."

"Too many already," repeated Owen, as his eye fell on a little table on which lay or eight newspapers, received this morning destined to be replaced by the same to-morrow. "Too many! That depends how they are divided. Perhaps you forget that while Members of Parliament have or eight to themselves every day, there are seven or eight thousand people who buy one paper, and seven or eight millions of sons who never see one at all. You must yourself ready for your morning ride before you have half got through such a pile of papers as lies there, and may find it a tedious part of your duty to read so much politics every day; but if you steal into the dark bye-paths of a town like this, and hear what people are saying in their ignorance against being governed

paper, you will presently lose the fancy that we have too many newspapers already."

"Too many by that one copy you spoke of, in my opinion, Mr. Owen. The people in Arneside did very well without any newspaper when I was a boy, I remember. I wish you had been pleased to consult me before you took such a step as sending them one. You should know better than to fall into the propensity of the time, for pampering the common people. You talk as wisely as anybody about putting gin in their way, and I do not see that they want news any more than gin. That was one of the few good things my mother used to say. When some complaint came to her ears about the price of newspapers, she asked whether anybody thought any harm of taxing gin; and whether the common people could not do without news as well as without spirits. She was right enough, for once. The common people can do without news. News is a luxury, as somebody said."

"O, yes. News can be done without; and so can many other things. You may lock a man into a house, and he will still live. You may darken his windows from the sun at noonday, and the stars at night, and he will still live. You may let in no air but what comes down the chimney, and he will still live. You may chain him to the bed-post, you may stuff his ears, and cover his eyes, and tie his hands behind him, and he can 'do without' the use of his limbs and his senses, and of God's noblest works: but it was not for this that God sent his sun on its course,

and set the stars rolling in their spheres, and freshened the breezy hills, and gave muscles to our strong limbs, and nerves to our delicate organs. He did not make his beautiful world that one might walk abroad on it, while a thousand are shut into a dark dungeon. Neither did he give men the curiosity with which they watch and listen, and the imagination with which they wander forth, and the reason with which they meditate among his works, that the one might be baffled, and the others fettered and enfeebled. And what does any one gain by such tyranny? Does the sun shine more brightly when a man thinks he has it all to himself, than when the reapers are merry in the field, and the children are running after butterflies in the meadow? Would Orion glow more majestically to any one man if he could build a wall up to the high heaven, and stop the march of the constellation, and part it off, that common eyes might not look upon it? If not, neither can any one gain by shutting up that which God has made as common to the race as the lights of his firmament, and the winds which come and go as he wills. That word ‘news’ is a little word and a common word; but it means all that is great as the results of the day, and holy as the march of the starry night. It is the manifestation of man’s most freshly compounded emotions, the record of his most recent experiences, and the revelation of God’s latest providences on earth. Are these things to be kept from the many by the few, under the notion that they are property? Are these things

now to be doled out at the pleasure, and to suit the purposes of an order of men, as the priests of Catholic countries measured out their thimblefull of the waters of life, in the name of him who opened up the spring, and invited every one that thirsted to come and drink freely ? To none has authority been given to mete out knowledge, according to their own sense of fitness, any more than to those priests of old ; but on all is imposed the religious duty of providing channels by which the vital streams of knowledge shall be brought to every man's door. If, in this day, any man who seeks to be a social administrator desires that the few should cover up their reservoirs lest they should overflow for the refreshment of the many, it is no wonder if his cistern grows so foul as to make him question in right earnest at last, whether there be not something more poisonous in the draught than in gin itself ; and much that is perilous in the eagerness of the crowd who rush to lap whatever cannot be prevented from leaking out."

" You mean to say that our universities are fouled reservoirs, I suppose ? It would become you to speak more modestly till you have been there."

" I know nothing of what is within the universities, further than by watching what comes out. The vague idea that I have of the knowledge that pervades them is perhaps as reverential as you, or any other son of such an institution, can desire : but I own that my reverence would be more ardent and affectionate if I could see

“I judge by what I see. When men next thing is to communicate; especi by communicating they lose nothing t But it is not so in this case. What universities done towards showing tl and holiness of knowledge, as the most and the highest blessing which God has the living and breathing race of man have the universities done to diffuse treasures into every corner of the lan have they applied their knowledge to promotion of the happiness of the stat ing their doors to all who would come vering or sanctioning the best principle lation and government, countenancing private virtue, and being foremost in and enforcing whatever might fulfil the poses of knowledge by making the number of rational beings as wise and

luxury is reserved to pamper the few while the many starve."

"I do not see much starving in the case, when we have not only too many regular newspapers, but scores of unstamped publications, which circulate their scores of thousands each. Precious stuff for your common people to batten upon!"

"When we once come to the question of quality, sir, there may be less to be said than about quantity. Is there anything here,—or here,—taking up the "John Bull" and the "Age," "that will make the public wiser and better than they would become by reading the 'Twopenny Treat' or the 'Poor Man's Guardian.' That there is any such 'precious stuff' for readers to batten on is the fault of those who, by keeping up one newspaper monopoly, have created another."

"What new monopoly, pray? And what public would ever endure two monopolies of the same article?"

"There are two publics to suffer by the two monopolies. While the tax-gatherers take five-pence out of every seven-pence that is given for a newspaper; while the practice of advertising is so kept down by the duty as to deprive the proprietors of their legitimate profits; while a capital of between thirty and forty thousand pounds is required to conduct a good daily paper, no journal will or can be honest, cheap, and successful; and the middle classes, who can afford to see only one paper, will suffer by the long-established monopoly of the old journals. While men of more wit than capital are tempted or driven to

while illegal ones may be had for two-pence.
Have you seen any of these illegal publications?

"Yes. Precious stuff! Falsehoods in
sentence; blunders in every line; as any one
chose might show in a minute."

"Unfortunately, no one will choose it,
present state of affairs. It must be easy
to controvert any publication so bad as to
scribe; but the opportunity is not allowed.
falsehoods and blunders are crammed down
people's throats, and no one can unchoke
because the law interferes to prevent the cir-
culation of opinions. I know of a young
Arneside who actually believes that all
manufacturers make it a principle and a joy
to oppress and worry their workmen, and
all rulers study nothing so regularly and
ously as how to wring the hearts of the
number of people. He reads this (and

vanted his being wise? He has shown his disposition to become so by his eagerness after such reading as he can obtain; and if he has got so far as to learn the strength of a bad argument, alas for those who step in to prevent his getting farther, and learning its weakness in the presence of a better! If he cannot find sound political teachers, where lies the blame?"

"If you had newspapers quite free, who do you suppose would write for the common people? We should be inundated with blasphemous and seditious publications."

"When a man goes with his money in his hand to purchase a newspaper, do you think he is asked whether he is one of the common people? And when newspapers sell for the cost of production and a fair profit, who is likely to produce the best, and sell the most,—the respectable and educated capitalist, or the ignorant and needy agitator? When newspapers have fair play, their success will depend, I fancy, like that of other articles, on their quality; and I never yet heard of any instance in which any class of people failed to purchase the better article in preference to the worse, when both were fairly set before them. Moreover, I never heard of a wise and kind government, whether of a single family, a city, or a nation, that did not desire rather than fear that its proceedings should be known and discussed."

"Ah! that shows how little you know of the plague and mischief of being talked over, when any business is in hand. If you were in the

THE POLICY OF M.P.S.

of those who have to transact affairs in our colonies, and in our colonies, you would vexed to laugh at the nonsense talked about us. There is nothing too ridiculous to be credited. A plague of tongues that spread such things rather on the policy which all to be originated and to pass current among the King's subjects at home and abroad, believe all that is said of government, and all that is ridiculous people, it seems time that better knowledge should be given to both. world lasts, social beings can never be discussing their rulers and their neighbours if we are annoyed at their errors, the world is not silence but truth. When news circulate untaxed, and not till then, there will be an approach to a general understanding of social peace."

" You are not exactly the person to talk of social peace, I think, Mr. Owen, when you bent on setting me and my electors aside by publishing my family quarrels, in such a manner as I can say."

Owen did not choose to remain to be asked by further entreaties that he would take his seat. He rose, observing that this was a case where he had no more concern than with a reporter, and nothing more. If Mr. had anything further to say, he would

his appeal to the proprietors of the "Western Star."

A few last words were vouchsafed to him before he left the room. Their purpose was to assure him that if this report appeared, he need never apply to Mr. Arruther for assistance, in case of his fool of a brother getting into any scrape, or he himself ever being tried for libel, or any disaster, public or private, befalling him. If Owen should, on consideration, decide to accommodate Mr. Arruther, that gentleman would see what he could do on any occasion when he might be of service.

CHAPTER VIII.

FAMILY SECRETS.

MR. ARRUTHER's evil bodings had had some effect in depressing Owen's spirits before he opened the following letter from his mother, which he found on the table of his little apartment when he reached his lodgings. Nurse's share of the correspondence with her son usually consisted of cheerful and loving messages, sent by some friendly mediator who might be likely to see Owen, or was about to drop him a line on business. She had never before sent a letter, but once; and that was when the clergyman had stopped her in the churchyard, not only to ask after all her children, but to praise them accord-

ing to their respective deserts. On sion, nurse had gone straight to the sc and asked him to give her a seat besid while she told him what she wished to Owen. Then, how had her matern raised the blush on her cheek while the effort to repeat the clergyman's v how, while she looked round on the b the superior lamp, the sanded floor shelf of books, did she assure herse old narrow cottage, with its brick floo as happy a place to so favoured a mot self! She now wrote under differe stances, as her letter will show.

" My dear Son,

" This letter does not come out of room you know so well, as the last di your old teacher is so good as to writer. I have asked him to come me, though mine is but a poor place with his. One reason is, that I di anybody to overhear what I am going : and there is no fear of being overhear as I am mostly alone of an evening. I feel the disadvantage of not bei write myself,—that I am obliged to g to write what I have to say against m dren. Yet not against them, neithe seems a hard word to say: but I me have been loth anybody should know not altogether so happy as we once could have let you know it in any w

this. The short of the matter is, Owen, that Ambrose is in such a way that I cannot tell what to say to him next. He and Mr. Waugh have been quarrelling sadly. It is not for me to say which is right ; and, to be sure, many of Mr. Waugh's other workpeople have been doing the same thing : but all I know is that there were no such troubles before Ambrose joined the Lodge, as they call it ; and Mr. Waugh gives the same wages as before, and living is cheaper. I can only say now that Ambrose is tramping about, here and there, when work is over, and at times when he used to be at home ; and that he is grown fond of show ; attending a brother's funeral, as he called it, yesterday, and thinking more of the blue ribbons and the procession, I am afraid, than that a fellow-mortal was gone to his account. Indeed, he said in the middle of it that there is nothing like ceremony after all ; which is not just what the Lord would have us think when he calls a brother away. I lay it all to the newspaper that Mr. Ryan brought ; and the more that Mr. Ryan was taken up for selling it, and is now in prison on that account. I little thought that a child of mine would ever have to do with what was unlawful ; and I never would have looked at the pictures in this paper if I had guessed what the justices would think : but Ambrose was pleased with what Ryan did when he was taken up ; though folks suppose he will not be let out the sooner for it. He made a great flourish in the street, and cried out, ' Englishmen, will you suffer this ?' It made my heart turn

within me to think that one that I have known as an honest man for so many years should bring his grey hairs into a prison ; and I have believed that Ryan would do nothing wrong. Ambrose says he has not, and I am up a rejoicing against he comes out ; but the justices say he has ; and so what can I think ? But I wish your brother Ambrose persuaded to give up thinking of a triumph against the justices, when Ryan is condemned. I tell him that it is no triumph, after considering that Ryan will then have been condemned all the time that it was thought fit to condemn him there. But the time is past when I can mind that I say ; though I ought to speak plain, and do not ; being aware, as I am, that I say little that is worth minding. I never had to say this of you ; and I am mistaken if Ambrose be wiser than I am. I will be asking whether I comfort or distress Mildred. My dear, I can only say that Mildred is no comfort to me ; and I do not know why, I can no more tell you what I feel over her than if I lived at L——. I think, God help me ! that the poor old woman,—for never a word does she speak when she can manage to hold her tongue, as sure as ever any neighbour goes out with us together, she is off like a shot, a greater fool of her till some third person is present. I should be truly thankful if any one could tell me out the reason of such a change.

than I can well bear, if it is not a sin to say so. I try to comfort myself, my dear boy, with thinking of you who are nothing but a blessing to me. I try to be thankful, as in duty bound: but it so happens, while you are so far away, and the others just before my eyes, or expected home every moment and not coming, I cannot be comforted as it is my duty to be. It is another trouble to find the neighbours not what they were to me. Farmer Mason would not let me go and nurse his wife yesterday, ill as she is, and with nobody to watch her properly of a night. He said his cattle had pined of late, and he had lost all his fowls; looking at me, just as if I could have helped his losses, when there is nobody more sorry than I am that such mis-haps should have followed the fire that well nigh ruined him, so long ago. And so it seems with others who do not look friendly upon me as they did. Everything appears to be going wrong with everybody; and we do not seem able to comfort one another as we used to do. This is a sad saying to end with; so I just add that Kate Jeffery is the same good girl, whatever changes come over others; and I depend on her going on in her own right way. You will be glad to hear this; and I hope you will not make yourself too uneasy about the rest: but I could not help opening my mind to you, having always done so before, and never with so much occasion. And now I shall wish to know if you have anything to say upon this. He that holds the pen promises to read me whatever you may write, very

teacher's accuracy in reading the letter
quested, or of his discretion about its
but Owen had no intention of com-
paper what he had to say. He must g
Arneside, without delay, and see whe-
thing could be done to make the pe-
happier than they seemed to be at pre-
obtained leave to go down, the next :
and, in the meantime, got no sleep fo-
of his mother's sorrows, and of the
must pass before he could do anything
them.

CHAPTER IX. THE MYSTERIES LAID OPI

dge. He had helped to blindfold them, and guide them through the mummeries which were calculated to answer any purpose rather than that of adding sanctity to an oath. The ragon of the verse to be gabbled over, the dress-
g up, the locking in, were more like the hristmas games of very young school-boys than the actual proceedings, the serious business of town men. Mummery has usually or always risen from an inconvenient lack of shorter and sainer methods of explanation, and of facilities for communication. This sort of picture-writing is discarded, by common consent, wherever the less comes in to fulfil the object with more ease, speed, and exactitude. When Ambrose declared at "there is nothing like ceremony, after all," he testified that he belonged to a nation or class which is stinted in the best means of communication, and kept in an infantine state of knowledge and pursuit. If he had been growing up to a period of mature wisdom, like his brother, he would have told the brethren of his lodge that there is nothing so childish as ceremony, after all. To form into a lodge, or a company, or whatever it may be called, when a number of men have business to do, is the most ready and objectionable method of transacting that business; but if the brethren cannot be kept in order and harmony without being amused by shows, excited by mystification, they had far better be playing cricket on the green, than pretend to insist in conducting the serious affairs of their ass. Much better would it have been for

Ambrose to have been playing cricket on the green this evening, than frightening people even more ignorant than himself with death's heads, horrible threats, and oaths made up of the most alarming words that could be picked out of the vocabulary of unstamped newspapers. Much better would it have been for him to have been reading anything,—book, pamphlet, or newspaper,—than to have sent his sister on such an errand as she was transacting on the hills.

Mildred was made, without her own knowledge, a servant of the lodge, a messenger from all the discontented with whom Ambrose was connected to all the discontented in the district. This trouble was imposed upon her because the country folks were unable to read, and paper was dear, and advertisements were dearer still. The object was to bring people together to consult on their fortunes, and the measures that should be taken to mend them. Mr. Arruther would have said that it was well that so improper an object should be frustrated by the absence of all assistance from the press: but Mr. Arruther might have been told that there is no frustrating such an object; and that the only effect of the press not being concerned in it was, that the summons bore a very different character from what it would have had, if there had been perfect freedom of communication. In a newspaper, the notice would have been that people were to meet at such a spot, at such an hour, and for such and such a purpose. As it was, Mildred was sounding over the hills, shivering whenever the

overtook her, as if it must bring something dreadful; starting if she found any one awaiting her at the appointed places, and trembling if it was herself that must wait; and faltering or gabbling in equal terror, as she delivered the circular which was to be carried forwards by those whom she met; the circular being as follows:—

"Meet on Arneford Green,
Six and seven between.
Bring words as sharp as sickles,
To cut the throats
Of gentlefolks,
That rob the poor of victuals.
Hungry guts and empty purse
May be better, can't be worse."

The political wisdom of the district had discovered that all was going wrong within it. Farmer Mason's live stock was dying off, and his wife had been long confined to her bed with some grievous affliction. Neighbour Green's dog had gone mad, and had been very near biting some children that were playing in the road. The wheat on the uplands looked poorly; and the mill-stream was dry; so that many of Mr. Waugh's workpeople were out of employ. It must be a very bad government that allowed all this to happen at once, some people said: but there were many who hinted that the blame did not all rest with the Government, and that there was one person who might some day prove to have had more to do with those disasters than everybody liked to say. This hint had gone the round, and become amplified in its course, till it was con-

witcheries.

The affair had been brought to a crisis evening, when Mildred was delivering her on the hills. She was expected and wait for. Suddenly she fell in with a party who would not let her proceed till she had been on her knees to tell all she knew of her proceedings, of the nature of her interview with her black cat, and of the uses of the various apparatus which now filled her cabinet as well as the shelf. The girl knew no more what she was required to confess ; but what she could to please her tyrant she poured out all the nonsensical fancies, absurd suspicions, which had been accumulating in her ignorant mind from the day of her childhood till now. The sum total proved more satisfactory than the party had expected. There was now but one thing to be done.

cisely what kind and degree of influence she had exerted over poor Mrs. Arruther : for it was not to be forgotten how the lightning had split the tree beside the lady's monument, the last thing before it fired Farmer Mason's barn.

While all this was passing, nurse had dismissed the good-natured schoolmaster, and had looked after him from the door, shading her candle with her apron, till she could see him no longer ; and had sat down, with a sigh at her loneliness, to mend one more pair of stockings for Ambrose, to take the chance of one or other of her children coming home for the night. She had nearly given the matter up when she thought she heard a little noise outside the door. As she looked up, she saw a very white face pressed close to the window, and looking in upon her.

" Come in ! Who's there ? Lift up the latch and come in, whoever you are," cried she, who, having never wished harm to any human being, had no fear of receiving harm from the hands of any. " My girl!" exclaimed she, as Mildred stood on the threshold, looking uncertain whether to set foot in the cottage, or to retreat, " My dear, ye are right enough to come home to a warm bed to-night. It will be but a chilly night for sleeping beside the fold, if that is really what ye do when ye don't come home. I've been looking for ye, my dear ; so, come in, and shut the door, and see what supper I've been keeping ready for ye. Why do ye keep standing outside in that way, Mildred ?"

As nurse sat at the table, looking over her

THE MYSTERIES LAID OPE

acles, with her candle on one side, and the other, drowsily opening and closing, as if quite at ease, there seemed something which prevented Mildred advancing a step towards the party. She called in a shrill tone,

"They're coming."

Who was coming,—whether Aylmer and the brethren from the lodge, or the English, or Turks, or any people more to be named,—could not be ascertained. All that was known out of Mildred was, "They're coming." The outer door was still standing wide, the party proceeding, when they came.

A night of horrors followed; horrors which were once perpetrated in the metropolis of mighty empires; and then descended to inferior towns; and then were banished from country; and now are seldom to be seen even in the remotest haunts of ignorance. Such horrors are not yet extinct. The sacrifice of nurse Ede, others, perhaps of less and kind of heart, have met a fate.

During the whole of the dreadful silence and torment, the mother caressed her children. As if they had all been dead, she implored them to bear witness as to life had been, and to save her from death. She had reared her sons with watchfulness, from the time that they could only grasp her finger, up to the strength which might have saved her. Owen was far away, dreaming of

as for Ambrose, his face was never seen, all that night. Mildred was present,—standing in her mother's view during all those fearful hours; but the call on her was also in vain. She stood staring, with her arms by her sides, and her hair on end, only wincing and moving back a little when her mother's appeals to her became particularly vehement. This was the child who had been the object of as fond parental hopes as had ever been shed over the unconsciousness of infancy. Hers was the arm which was to have been her mother's support to church on Sabbath days. Hers were the hands which were to have relieved her parent of the more laborious of their homely tasks. She it was who should have enlivened the day with her cheerful industry, and amused the evening with the intelligence which nurse had done her best to put in the way of improvement. This was the child! And this was the contrast which flitted through her unhappy mother's mind as she was dragged past Mrs. Arruther's monument, and taunted with the memory of that poor lady.

Mrs. Arruther and she were both unhappy as mothers. The child of the one was as destitute (whatever might be his scholarship) of all the knowledge which is of most value in the conduct and embellishment of life, as these his despised neighbours; and the protracted torment which he caused his parent might, in its sum, equal that which nurse was enduring to-night. The crowning proof of his substantial ignorance was

his desire and endeavour to keep others state of darkness of which the deeds of thi were some of the results. There will be n mothers so wretched as Mrs. Arruther a nurse when mothers themselves shall kno to give their children true knowledge ; ar their children shall have access to th knowledge without hindrance and withou sure.

One thrilling sound of complaint at las trated the chamber of the clergyman ; consequence, nurse was presently in her o attended upon by Kate Jeffery, while sat in a corner of the cottage, staring as She let Kate bring her to the bedside, w parent's unquenchable tenderness was l up once more ; but the girl was pitiable a what to say, and how to conduct herself.

" I never did, my dear ; if you will bel last words I shall ever speak. I never thought of doing such things as they say them so, when I am gone ; will you ? C them what I said. O Mildred, cannot y mise me even that much ?"

" She is mazed," said Kate Jeffery, in of her old play-fellow. " She will come and-by."

" I wish I was mazed, if it be not tha say so," muttered nurse. " But it wi over soon. Well : it is God's will that Owen is so far from me at this time."

She little guessed how soon her sc

would be standing where Kate was now. But, soon as it was, it was too late for nurse.

It was indeed a withered and haggard cheek (as nurse once anticipated) that her children looked upon as they watched her rest;—not her breathing sleep, but her last long rest. Owen must have been quite overthrown by meeting such a shock on his arrival, or he could never have spoken to Mildred as he did. He upbraided her for the stupidity with which she had given ear to the ridiculous falsehoods which had been Hatchet against one of the most harmless women that had ever lived: falsehoods that any child in L—— would have been ashamed to be asked to believe. But it was impossible that Mildred, or any one else, could have really credited such things. It could have been only a presence—

“No; no pretence,” Kate interposed to say. “There would have been no malice, if there had not been profound ignorance. No one could have helped loving nurse, and doing nothing but good to her, up to her dying day, if it had but been known why and how she practised her art; and that no woman has really the power, by prayers and charms, of stopping mill-streams and maddening dogs.”

“How could I tell?” mournfully asked Mildred. “They all said—I’m sure I thought they would have killed me first. They all said, and they all think, that she was an awful and wicked woman; and what else could I think?

I'm sure I never durst touch her, or scarce anything that she had touched before me, after what Maude Hallowell told me."

"You are out of your mind, I think," said Owen, bitterly. "To talk as you do, and she lying there!"

"And if Mildred was out of her mind, Mr. Owen," said Kate, in a low voice, "is she to be taunted with it, as if it was her fault? I should rather say that she has very little mind; for hers seems to me never to have grown since we were at the Sunday school together. Surely, Mr. Owen, it is the narrow mind that is least able to help itself under foolish fears, and any horrible fancy that may be riding it till it is weary. Surely it is not merciful to taunt a mind that is so miserable in itself already."

"Then I will not taunt her, **Kate**. It will be sorrow enough to her, all her days, to have to pass my mother's grave, and think how she was sent there. Go, poor girl, and tell the clergyman that it is all over. Nobody shall hurt you. I will take care of you. Nobody shall blame you: the blame shall rest elsewhere."

"Where?" asked the bewildered girl, as, in a flurried manner, she tied on her bonnet to go to the clergyman. "What are you going to do now, Owen? Where—what did you say last?"

"That nobody shall blame you, as I did just now, for what has happened to our mother. It is no fault of yours, Mildred, any more than it

can be called Ambrose's fault that he now lies in prison——”

“ In prison !”

“ Yes : he has been taken there (God knows whether according to law or not) for the part he has taken about swearing in the brothers at his Lodge. There he was, poor fellow, when my mother was calling upon him in a way to break a heart of stone, they say.” Owen saw the convulsion which passed over his sister's countenance as he made this allusion ; and he resolved to refer to that dreadful scene no more. “ Whatever may be done with Ambrose, he has perished. His life is blasted, whether, as some suppose, he is sent abroad, or whether his punishment is to be worked out at home. How should he have known better ? The only bit of law he knew, he learned by accident from a newspaper ; and when he would have learned more, the only lesson-book he could get taught him wrong ; and it could never have taught him so wrong, if those which would have instructed him better had not been kept out of his reach. The judge and gaoler are to be his teachers now. Those little know what they are about who take pains,—for any purpose,—to hold men ignorant. If they could keep the light of the sun from the earth with the thickest of clouds, they would do mischief enough in making the plants come up sickly, and the tall trees dwindle away, and rendering every thing fearful and dismal, wherever we turn : but all this is harmless trifling.

compared with the practice of keeping without the light which God has pro-
it. This it is that brings discontent
God, and bad passions among men ; to
to guilt to the careless, and long heart
to the kindest and best ; and the fierce-
ders as the end of all. O, mother ! me-

THE END.



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